The COMMUNIST

VOL. VII SEPTEMBER, 1928 NO. 9

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Politics and the Fly Hunt — *Moissaye J. Olgin*

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THE COMMUNIST

A Theoretical Magazine for the Discussion of Revolutionary Problems

Published by the Workers (Communist) Party of America

BERTRAM D. WOLFE, *Editor*

Entered as second class matter November 2, 1927, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1890.

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Make all checks, money orders, and correspondence to: THE COMMUNIST, 43 East 125th St., New York. Subscription rates $2.00 a year; $1.25 for six months; foreign and Canada $2.50 a year. Single copies 25 cents.

BEATRICE CARLIN, *Business Manager*

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Candidate for Vice-President

WORKERS (COMMUNIST) PARTY

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Hoover and Smith—Mouthpieces of Big Business—Accept the Nomination

By BENJAMIN GITLOW

THERE are no fundamental differences between the Republican and Democratic parties. Both are today the parties of the big bourgeoisie, of finance capital, of the super-trusts, in other words, of Wall Street. On every major question, they are in agreement. Even on those questions where there seem to be some differences, a careful examination of the facts will reveal that there is actually agreement.

The acceptance speeches of Hoover and Smith show how few points of difference there are between the two parties. Both candidates pledge themselves to Big Business. Both candidates ignore the problems confronting the workers. Both candidates offer some will-o'-the-wisp relief to the farmers.

Hoover paints a picture of "all's-well-with-the-United States." "We have prosperity, happy homes, no distress from unemployment. A bad situation in textile, coal and agriculture; that, however, will be overcome. The main stress, he places upon the statement that conditions are good, the people are happy, everybody is working and participating in the enormous increase in the national income.

Smith disputes Hoover's statement on unemployment, gives the facts which Hoover avoids mentioning—that there are 4,000,000 unemployed—and attacks the Republican Party for corruption in government.

The workers will be harangued in the coming elections to the effect that the real difference between the two parties is on the question of prohibition. Mr. Hoover will be presented as a dry. Mr. Smith as a wet. Mr. Hoover will argue against the changing of the Volstead act. Mr. Smith will argue for its modification.

But both Mr. Hoover and Mr. Smith stand for law enforcement, for the strict carrying out of the constitution and laws of the country. Mr. Smith reiterates this in his acceptance speech saying that as president of the United States, he reserves the right to recommend to Congress certain changes within the law. However, since Big Business recognizes that the speed-up system requires prohibition to

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insure steady, sober workers, whose mechanical precision and speed should not be impaired by the excessive use of alcohol, Congress can be expected to have a safe majority of Republicans and Democrats for the maintenance of prohibition.

HOOVER'S SPEECH

Mr. Hoover, in his acceptance speech, raises the following points: Says Mr. Hoover:

> "During this less than eight years our population has increased by 8%, yet our national income has increased by over $30,000,000,000 per year or more than 45%. Our production and therefore our consumption of goods has increased by over 25%."

This is a frank statement of the enormous surplus made by the capitalists of the United States. It shows how American imperialism serves the capitalist interests and particularly the big capitalist interests.

Governor Smith, finding it necessary to refute Republican prosperity, gives out the correct statement that in the year 1926 the latest available figures show that one-fourh of one per cent of all the 430,000 corporations in the United States earned two-thirds of the profits of all the corporations. It means that the super-trusts—General Motors, Standard Oil, U. S. Steel, etc., were the corporations that took the major slice of profits from the $30,000,000,000 increase of income. With an average wage for all workers in America about $22.00 per week, and 4,000,000 unemployed, it shows to what extent imperialism, with its mass production and enormous profits is further impoverishing the workers in the United States.

Hoover further states:

> "One of the oldest and perhaps the noblest of human aspirations has been the abolition of poverty. By poverty I mean the grinding by under-nourishment, cold, and ignorance and fear of old age of those who have the will to work. We in America today are nearer to the final triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of any land. The poorhouse is vanishing from among us. We have not yet reached the goal, but, given a chance to go forward with the policies of the last eight years, we shall soon, with the help of God, be in sight of the day when poverty will be banished from this nation. There is no guarantee against poverty equal to a job for every man. That is the primary purpose of the economic policies we advocate."

Hoover expects the elimination of poverty with the help of God.

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He mentions under-nourishment, fear of old age, lack of work, etc., but proposes no remedies, offers no program for social insurance. His proposal is to let the conditions that make for poverty prevail, and leave to God the finding of a solution.

Another Hoover gem. Says Hoover:

> "During my term as Secretary of Commerce, I have steadily endeavored to build up a system of cooperation between government and business."

In other words, it is not cooperation that is proposed. The business interests have been the government in the Coolidge administration. The engineer Hoover will, if elected, be elected by the funds of Wall Street and his administration will be of, by and for Wall Street. The cooperation Hoover speaks of has always been cooperation in the interest of Big Business.

A real contribution was made by Hoover in his acceptance speech when he dealt with labor. He made some confessions and some analyses which fully substantiate whatever charges the Communists have made against the reactionary labor leaders who dominate the American trade-union movement. Says Mr. Hoover:

> "It has been my good fortune during the past twelve years to have received the cooperation of labor in many directions and in the promotion of many public purposes."

Mr. Hoover has been one of the outstanding men in the Government furthering the interests of American imperialism. In these matters he confesses that he has had the cooperation of labor, that is, the reactionary labor bureaucrats. No one can point to a single act by Hoover in the last twelve years in the interests of the trade-union movement.

Here is Hoover's analysis of the trade-union movement of the United States:

> "The trade-union movement has maintained two departments from such movements in all other countries. They have been staunch supporters of American individualism and American institutions. They have steadfastly opposed subversive doctrines from abroad. Our freedom from foreign social and economic diseases is in large degree due to this resistance by our own labor. Our trade unions, with few exceptions, have welcomed all basic improvements in industrial methods. This largeness of mind has contributed to the advancing standards of living of the whole of our people."

First, the reactionary trade-union leaders have been staunch supporters of American institutions. These are many: the open shop,

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government by injunction, speed-up, government strike-breaking, wage-cuts, unemployment, government by Wall Street, military intervention in Latin America, China, Nicaragua, etc.

Second, they (the reactionary leaders) have steadily opposed subversive doctrines from abroad. What is the full import of this statement? It means that Hoover recognizes the valuable, treacherous services the reactionary American labor movement can render in the class struggle. That it is a force against militancy and revolutionary action on the part of the workers. Says Hoover: The fact that the United States does not experience the battles between capital and labor which Hoover terms foreign social and economic diseases, is due he says, in large measure to the resistance by our own labor. Hoover doesn't mince words in letting us know the role the labor bureaucrats are playing.

Third, Hoover confesses that "our trade unions, with few exceptions, have welcomed all basic improvements in industrial methods." In other words, the reactionary labor leaders have approved the policy of the capitalists in industry. Rationalization, with its speed-up, increased exploitation, wage reductions, elimination of hundreds of thousands of workers, has proceeded with the approval, sanction and aid of the reactionary trade-union officials.

As Communists we could not have stated it more plainly. Hoover's labor program is to continue this. The real problems confronting labor he ignores completely. On injunctions he says, not that the government strike-breaking-injunction policy should be abolished, but that the Republicans stand pledged to the curtailment of the excessive use of injunctions in labor disputes. Injunctions, however, will be used in the future as in the past, and even more so during a Hoover administration.

Hoover's firm belief in capitalism is expressed thus:

> "No one can rightly deny the fundamental correctness of our economic system."

How Big Business is becoming more and more an integral part of the U. S. Government is expressed by Hoover as follows:

> "The relations of Government and business are multiplying daily. They are yearly more dependent upon each other."

Hoover expresses his total subservience to Big Business. His loyalty pledge to Wall Street is as follows:

> "Business is practical, but it is founded upon faith—faith among our people in the integrity of business men, and faith that it will

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receive fair play from the Government. It is the duty of Government to maintain that faith. . . ."

It is the duty of Government, says Hoover, to maintain the faith of business. No wonder Wall Street doesn't fear Hoover.

Hoover's concern for Big Business, for Wall Street, for the imperialists is expressed in the following quotations from his speech:

"The Government can be of invaluable aid in the promotion of business."

"By economy in expenditures, wise taxation, and sound fiscal finance it can relieve the burdens upon sound business."

"By promotion of foreign trade it can expand the markets of our manufacturers."

"Both small and large business have their full place."

That both the Republicans and Democrats are grafters, Hoover puts as follows:

"In the past years there has been corruption participated in by individual officials and members of both parties in national, state and municipal affairs."

Hoover ends his speech by supporting the imperialist foreign policy of the United States, with a plea for the maintenance of the navy and merchant marine in the strength and efficiency that will assure national "safety" and with full praise to the Coolidge strike-breaking administration.

SMITH'S SPEECH

Mr. Smith's acceptance speech avoids even touching on those matters that Hoover raised. He, however, wants no one to mistake his loyalty to Big Business. So in the beginning of his speech he makes the following pertinent remarks:

"It is a fallacy that there is inconsistency between progressive measures protecting the rights of the people, including the poor and the weak, and a just regard for the rights of legitimate business great or small." (Hoover used almost the same term when he said both big and small business have their full place). "Therefore while I emphasize my belief that *legitimate business promotes the public welfare*. . . ."

Mr. Smith reiterates his interest in Big Business and that the Democratic Party favors Big Business and will serve it loyally when he states the following:

"The Democratic Party does not and under my leadership will not advocate any sudden or drastic revolution in our economic sys-

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tem, which might cause business upheavals and popular distress. The Democratic Party stands squarely for the maintenance of legitimate business. . . ."

Smith favors capitalism, no doubt about it. In this respect he agrees with Hoover. Hoover is for sound business. Smith for legitimate business. Neither is for the workers and poor farmers.

Smith favors the imperialist policy of the United States, but he does criticize the Republican administration for the Nicaraguan intervention. However, he is careful not to couple his criticism with a demand for the withdrawal of American military forces from Nicaragua.

The Monroe Doctrine, which is now a weapon in the hands of American imperialism for aggression and aggrandizement in Latin America, Smith favors 100 per cent. Smith as president, will not end intervention in Nicaragua but will continue the aggressive military intervention policy of the "democrat," Woodrow Wilson, who invaded Haiti and Santo Domingo, sent troops against Soviet Russia, etc.

On agriculture, Hoover promises the farmers, after election, a special department that will cost a few hundred million dollars. Smith promises them "a non-partisan conference of farmers, farm leaders, economists, finance and business, to work out a plan for farm relief." In other words, the poor farmers, faced with bankruptcy and the loss of their land, are promised "investigations," conferences and departments, not relief.

AND THE WORKERS?

On labor, Mr. Smith declares for collective bargaining. So does Hoover. On the question of injunctions against labor, Smith does not demand the end of government by injunction, but that some legislation must be framed to meet just causes for complaint in regard to the unwarranted issuance of injunctions.

Mr. Smith, if elected, would continue Woodrow Wilson's policies towards labor. The anti-labor policies of Woodrow Wilson need no elaboration. The brutal way in which he smashed the steel strike is a sample. The anti-labor record of the Tammany police and Tammany injunction-issuing judges is well known. The Democratic Attorney General, Palmer, and his raids upon the militant workers, mark a period of the most ferocious attacks upon the workers. This is what Smith pledges labor, what he has in store for it.

Mr. Hoover and Mr. Smith have not one word to say about the recognition of the Soviet Union. In this respect both reflect the

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hostility of American imperialism towards the first Workers' Republic in the world. Mr. Hoover and Mr. Smith will support the policy of American imperialism towards the Soviet Union 100% even to the extent of making war upon her.

Both candidates favor American imperialism's military policy and stand ready to plunge the country into an imperialist world struggle in the interest of Wall Street's desire for world domination.

The two acceptance speeches, Hoover's and Smith's, are speeches that are reactionary and that agree in the main questions raised. They are the speeches of candidates of Big Business and of American imperialism. The workers are promised nothing, offered nothing, in an attempt to gain their votes. The election of either one will mark a decided victory for Wall Street, a continuation of imperialist strike-breaking policy.

What the workers will get is demonstrated in the textile strikes of New Bedford and Fall River. Jailing of hundreds of workers, suppression of freedom of speech, breaking up of picket lines, brutal clubbing and assault of strikers, use of militia and bayonet charge against workers. In New Bedford we have a Democratic Al Smith administration. In Fall River a Republican Hoover administration. Any difference for the workers? None whatsoever!

* * * *

ERRATA: In the article "Marx, Lenin and the Commune," which appeared in *The Communist* for March, 1928, on page 138, line 9, "The Commune should have recognized" should read: "The Commune had to recognize." On the same page, line 11, "state power" should read "state apparatus."

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Politics and the Fly Hunt

FINANCE CAPITAL AND THE 1928 ELECTIONS

By MOISSAYE J. OLGIN

THE election campaign of 1928 calls to mind a scene from Gleb Uspensky. That writer introduces a Russian noble, a landlord, ruined by the reform of 1861 (abolition of serfdom). The man is overwhelmed by the new economic forces—modern capitalist agriculture, modern banks, large scale industrial production, transformation of labor into a commodity. He is helpless. He is forelorn. Life, to him, has lost all meaning.

On the scene arrives a city man with an instrument hitherto unknown to the landlord. It is a brand new, well made fly swatter. The guest shows the nobleman how to use it. The nobleman is first amused, then captured by the new sport. Fly killing becomes now his chief occupation. The hunt is conducted with a ceremonial, with servants attending. All sorts of thrills are provided by the enterprising city man. A strict account is kept of the flies killed. Discrepancies in the records loom up to the importance of tragedies. An escaped fly is the subject of elaborate detailed discussion. A successful hunt is celebrated and inscribed in the annals.

The inventor and manipulator of this occupation becomes indispensable to the landlord's welfare. He makes him manager of his estates. He gives him unlimited power to represent him in all business transactions. This city shark becomes the beneficiary of all the landlord's considerable wealth, while the latter is kept engrossed in the fly sport.

The present American economic scene is only faintly reminiscent of Uspensky's. There, a city shark waxing fat on the ruins of feudal agriculture; here, imperialist capitalism exploiting not only the economically foredoomed class of middle and petit-bourgeoisie, but also *the class of the future*—the proletariat. The so-called political campaign activities, however, bear a striking resemblance to the vicissitudes, and the thrills of that famous fly hunt.

American finance capital is achieving here a thing that may not be entirely new; that has, however, never before been displayed in such proportions: *Elimination of an actual political struggle; sidetracking and rendering entirely ineffective of the so-called democratic apparatus*, which is supposed to materialize the sovereignty of

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the people; reduction of the campaign to "problems" having as much to do with the basic conditions of life of the population as the fly hunt had to do with the management of the Russian landlord's estates.

That finance capital and imperialism are effecting profound changes in the capitalistic state and, consequently, in bourgeois democracy, is nothing new to Marxists. One of the first to formulate this law was N. Bukharin.

It must be noted that the German reformist, Rudolf Hilferding, who a few years before the war came out with the first comprehensive investigation of modern imperialism in his book *Finance Capital*, paid very little attention to the *political changes* brought about by monopoly capital. Hilferding only calls attention to the concentration of state power in the hands of finance capital and the sharpening of the class-struggle. The *structure* of the state power does not interest him, for, though he ends his book with "proletarian dictatorship replacing the dictatorship of the magnates of capital," he understands it as *a passing of the existing bourgeois state apparatus into the hands of the working class*. Thus he says in his last chapter (*The Proletariat and Imperialism*): "Once finance capital has placed under its control the most important branches of production, it will be sufficient that society, through its conscious executive organ, *the state seized by the proletariat*, should get hold of finance capital." Seizure of the bourgeois state apparatus through the ballot has since become the chief article of faith of the Second International reform socialists.

Bukharin, who was one of the first Marxists to stress the *political* consequences of the monopolization of capital, in his book, *Imperialism and World Economy*, thus characterizes the changes in state organization wrought by finance capital:

> "With the growth of the importance of state power (due to imperialism) its inner structure also undergoes changes. State power, more than ever before, becomes the 'executive committee of the ruling classes.' Of course, it has always reflected the interests of the 'upper strata.' But insofar as the upper strata themselves were an amorphous enough mass, the organized state apparatus confronted an unorganized class (or classes) whose interests it embodied.
>
> Now matters have changed radically. The state apparatus now embodies not only the interests of the ruling classes in general, but also their *collectively organized will*. It confronts, not atomized members of the ruling class, but their *organizations*. The government is thus transformed, *de facto*, into a "committee" elected by the representatives of the business men's organizations, and becomes

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the highest leading body of the state-capitalist trust. This is one of the main reasons for the so-called 'crisis of parliamentarism.' "[1]

In describing this crisis, Bukharin points out its following features: The struggle between the various groups of the bourgeoisie weakens as finance capital welds the entire bourgeoisie into "one reactionary mass." "Democratic" and "liberal" tendencies give place to monarchist tendencies due to the need of state dictatorship. "National Unity" becomes the outstanding ideology expressing itself in placing the "fatherland" higher than ever before. A *strong power* is a god of the modern bourgeoisie.

As to representative government so-called, "the parliament," says Bukharin, "now serves to a considerable degree only as a *decoration*, where decisions previously adopted in business men's organizations are passed, and where the collective will of the consolidated bourgeoisie finds its formal declaration."[2]

Our American party is becoming increasingly aware of the changes that the structure of state power is undergoing along these lines in the United States. The *theses on the present situation and the tasks of the Party* adopted at the February Plenum of the Central Executive Committee emphasized the "tremendous growth of the state power in America," "the increase of the executive power, the presidential power," "the tendency to use the official machinery of the government as a strikebreaking agency," growing concentration of government power "in the hands of the executive and judicial divisions at the expense of the elected legislative bodies" (Appropriations, sliding tariff, war without congressional sanction).

In our propaganda we have stressed the role of the state power as the executive committee of Big Business. The National Platform of our Party devoted two sections ("America Today" and "Capitalist Democracy") to a characterization of the present American state apparatus. Still, it would seem to require a series of special studies to make clear how far the decisions of Congress are now decisions previously adopted by the large corporations, and in what proportion does this phenomenon grow; how and how far the drawing together of the various groups of the bourgeoisie for the common imperialist aims has been reflected in the life of the American parties; in what respect the American state power and the changes therein differ from the bourgeois forms of imperialist dictatorship (where it assumes the form

[1](P. 124-5, Russian text. Emphasis by uukharin).

[2](*Ibid*: p. 125).

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of either Fascism or a coalition ministry with direct or indirect participation of the social-reformists).

It seems that the study of the process of *change*, of recasting the whole state apparatus—the jurisdiction, mode of action, and the composition of the presidential power, the judicial power, the cabinet, the diplomatic representatives, the two Houses, appointed vs. elected officers, the political parties—all this now being reshaped to fit more perfectly the imperialist aims of the state, must be one of the American contributions to the study of imperialism.

That all those changes are accompanied in the U. S. by, and are a reaction against the very process of mass dissatisfaction which was succinctly pictured in the draft programme of the C I. and first among which is "the constant menace of mass proletarian action," need not be discussed here. Suffice it to recall the large masses of workers, and the exploited farmers, whose situation is becoming worse, even when they still have the opportunity to work, and desperate when they are unemployed or driven off the farm.

The average citizen; *i. e.*, the Philistine, will say that the dissatisfaction of the masses is largely in the revolutionary imagination of the Communist. The Philistine (and it is a well-known fact that a college degree is not a remedy against Philistinism but rather conducive to it) does not realize that the masses have *almost no means of expression.* The mood of the masses cannot become crystallized because they have no adequate organization. (During the imperialist war, the social-chauvinists claimed that the reason for their joining the camp of the bourgeoisie was the patriotism of the working masses who had failed to offer any resistance to the mobilization orders and to voice any protest. It was *Lenin*, who, with a formidable array of facts and with a furious scorn, branded this subterfuge, proving that the masses were deprived both of *leadership* and of organizing *centers*).

That the masses are not in a state of either contentment or apathy has been testified to by no others than the complacent liberals of the ***New Republic*** who, writing editorially a tribute to Hoover's "sincerity" and agreeing with "his effort to vindicate the social objects of American democracy by working so far as possible with the business man rather than in opposition to him," expressed extreme doubt "whether they (the business men) can be persuaded to mend their ways without, as a result of their irresponsibility and blindness, *involving the future of the American people in some sort of social catastrophy.*"[3]

[3] *New Republic*, Aug. 22, emphasis mine—M. J. O.)

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The intellectual liberals have always sensed the coming of social catastrophies, probably because they dreaded them more than did the self-confident ruling classes.

It is the aim of the election campaign as hitherto conducted by the two "major" capitalist parties, first, *to make the expression of discontent on the part of the masses impossible*, or almost impossible, and, second, to amuse and distract the masses by a sort of campaign that is no campaign at all, but an elaborately staged fly hunt.

At this writing it is not known how much was paid, directly and in promises of lucrative state positions and other privileges, to "representatives" of labor and farmers to keep them in the harness of the capitalist election campaign. In due time part of these transactions may become known, part will probably forever remain in the dark. It is, however, beyond doubt that when, for instance, "Major" George Berry, the infamous president of the Pressmen's Union, who broke the splendid strike of the New York printing pressmen in 1926 by importing hosts of legalized strike-breakers from other cities, accepts the chairmanship of the Labor Bureau, formed by the Democratic National Committee for campaign purposes, he does so not merely out of love for Alfred Smith. And when he praises the Democratic nominees as "men of far-reaching business capacities, and records that manifest not only a keen understanding of the human element entering into governmental conduct, but a proved friendship for organized labor," he calculates what this "friendship" may mean to him, in terms of dollars or power, or both.

The fact that the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. failed to agree on the endorsement of a presidential candidate, leaving it to the respective local chieftains to strike the bargain, is nothing new in American labor policies; still, it signifies a gain for imperialism compared with 1924, when Gompers endorsed a third ticket.

Compared with 1924, the following traits of the present campaign seem to reveal the hand of finance capital in the direction indicated above:

1. There is an increased control of public opinion, as shown, for instance, by the growth of newspaper monopoly. According to *Editor and Publisher*, 69 daily newspapers have ceased publication since January 1, 1927. There are already, the magazine says, 937 cities in which there is only one newspaper as against 414 that have more than one daily. Out of 89 cities in Cali-

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fornia, only 26 have more than one journal; out of 77 in Illinois only 13 have more than one daily. The remaining newspaper increases its circulation at the expense of the dead ones. The total circulation is on the increase. *Editor and Publisher* admits that there is *a distinct and powerful movement toward the creation of a journalistic monopoly in each town or city*. A monopoly of news and political comment is a means of keeping the masses of the population ignorant about basic economic and political problems and feeding them with non-essentials.

2. There is no third-party movement. Nobody will dare say that the masses in 1928 are better situated, that there is more employment, more security, more confidence in the capitalist rule than there was in 1924. The fact that there is no third party does not prove conclusively that there is no urge for independent expression on the part of large sections of the population. It only proves that those who could organize and lead it have been either assimilated or intimidated by finance capital. Witness the "insurgent" Borah, joining the camp of Hoover. Witness old La Follette's "running mate" of four years ago, Wheeler, of Montana, jumping on Smith's band wagon. Witness the lone Norris, chastened and pessimistic, uttering a feeble sigh:

> "The fundamental issue in this campaign is not farm relief, although that is very important. It is not the prohibition issue, although that is also important. The real question involved is, shall the great trusts, particularly the water-power trust, control the destiny of our republic? When the trust is in control, it will take care of all subsidiary questions, and it will do it so effectively that none of these subsidiary questions will be solved for the benefit of the common folks."

Having thus diagnosed the case, the disheartened "radical" admits that he finds no suitable remedy outside of changing the electoral-college system—a poor consolation, indeed.

The power of wealth, the huge sums invested in the party machines, the control of the press, etc., have a *frightening* and *depressing* effect on such leaders and theoreticians of the bourgeoisie as are displeased with the rule of finance capital.

How a professor of political science approaches this problem, is exemplified by Dr. Harold R. Bruce in his *American Parties and Politics*. "Why has not the European practice of maintaining definitely reactionary, conservative, liberal, and radical parties been followed in the United States?" the professor pertinently asks. "Such a system," he says, "would remove many of the ambiguities and compromises of the present arrangement and produce political

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groups of greater sincerity and definiteness of principle. It would render unnecessary to unite incongruous elements and remove the temptation to pursue temporizing expedients."

The answer to this question is truly classic. The reason, says the professor, is that "although Americans cherish the appellation of 'liberal,' they for the most part shun the term 'radical.' This is essentially true in the light of recent experience with avowedly radical movements in Europe. Narrowly construed, a conservative party would have at heart the vested rights of property owners, probably large property holders, and thus quickly become known as the 'capitalist party,' a name that might produce large campaign funds and most certainly powerful criticism. As for the establishment of a reactionary party, it is quite impossible among a people that makes democracy a fetish and political reform an indication of progress. This leaves only a liberal party.[4]

There are so many fallacies in this one passage that a long article would be required to trace all of them. Let us note here that, *a*. in spite of mentioning "vested rights of property owners," the author does not ascribe conservatism or reactionaryism to a certain class composition; *b*. that he does not consider the two "major" parties either conservative or reactionary or capitalist; *c*. that he upholds, and repeats the naive bourgeois fable about this being a chosen people with particular democratic predilections; *d*. that as a teacher of political science he is an apologist of the existing control of parties and government by the super trusts.

This is the kind of theory that lies at the basis of the present campaign. Another author, of a more "radical" bent, openly declares for a third party, only *it must not be based upon economic issues*, he says, for "fundamentally weak are all pronouncements of program upon economic issues." It must come from "a vigorous minority that may be detached from class movements" and that will find support "in university communities and those influenced by them."[5] Whatever that may seem to mean, it means in reality aid and comfort to the two ruling parties.

3. Lodging of government functions in the hands, not of representatives of finance capital, but of financial magnates themselves, as exemplified by Mellon, Morrow and Dawes, has been continued in this campaign. Roy O. West, the newly appointed Secretary of

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[4](*American Parties and Politics*, American Political Science Series, pp. 39-40).

[5]Edgar E. Robinson, *The Evolution of American Political Parties*, p. 365)

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the Interior, was a close business associate of Sam Insull, the Chicago utility magnate, and is himself a millionaire. William F. Whiting, the new Secretary of Commerce appointed to succeed Hoover, is a large manufacturer and "one of the leading business men of Massachusetts."

4. The management of the Republican and Democratic campaigns has been openly taken over by financiers and recognized as their task. That the Republicans are working hand in hand with finance capital is known to everybody. Still, the "consent" of Henry Ford to "serve" on the Hoover-for-President Engineers' National Committee is an excellent illustration of the political apparatus becoming an adjunct to the apparatus of finance capital. At this writing, some grumbling is audible in Republican circles against the appointment of Machold as chairman of the New York State Republican Committee, the reason being that Machold is *president of the Northeastern Power Company* which owns or controls most of the public utility companies of Northern New York. The opponents fear that this appointment may strengthen Smith. Yet the appointment itself is very characteristic.

More characteristic in this respect is the "Wall-Streetization" of the Democratic Party. With Raskob of the General Motors as national chairman, with the Duponts and William Woodin contributing to the Democratic campaign fund, with Bernard Baruch coming out for Smith, the Democratic party has accomplished what the *New York Times* called an "overnight rebirth." It has cast off the remnants of the Bryan type of democracy; it has been divorced from all its appeal to the lowly; it has been bathed in the strong waters of high finance to remove the old odor of Tammany that appealed to the petit-bourgeoisie of the metropolitan city.

The "Wall-Streetization" of the Democratic Party and of Alfred Smith, the bringing them into the fold, the making them as much like the Republican Party as is humanly possible, is the major achievement of finance capital in the present campaign. Not that similar tendencies were not noticeable in the Democratic Party before (Davis vs. Coolidge) but there is a difference between tendency and consummation.

Having made a third party impossible, finance capital saw to it that no "trouble" might arise from too much radical phraseology of a shrewd politician who might wish to score successes by appealing to the class interests of the masses. Whatever Smith will now say about the unemployed, the farmers and similar matters—at this writing he has not yet delivered his "acceptance" speech—he has

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been made harmless by the strongest disinfectants. The elections are safe for finance capital.

Having accomplished this task, finance capital was ready to take both candidates to its bosom. *The Bulletin of the National City Bank* of New York says: "There is no issue between the candidates that is likely to make a disturbance in business circles. Almost as much may be said of the platforms." *The Magazine of Wall Street* says to the business man: "Either way(whether you vote for Smith or Hoover) you will not make much of a mistake—from the business point of view. The next Administration need not worry you as a business man or as a business unit or a business atom."

5. There was one more point that had to be clarified before endorsing Smith: the centralization of state power. This, too, Smith has ceded to finance capital. It was not difficult for him since "the new Tammany" had previously accomplished this in the State of New York. Smith stands pledged to "efficiency in administration," "consolidation of bureaus," "simplification of management," "end of federal waste" which, according to his declaration, will be a major issue in the campaign and which means nothing but *centralization of power* in the hands of appointed committees at the expense of the elective bodies. The circle is complete. Indeed, the "next administration" need not worry finance capital.

6. With two parties transformed into one; with two sets of candidates and two platforms left for the sake of maintaining a parliamentary appearance to impress the masses; with the scene set for the nation-wide comedy, the managers are ready to open the show.

In the main it is a fly-hunting performance. The actual rulers must feel like gods chuckling at vain human efforts. They could as well have made up a list of senators, congressmen, president and cabinet members and have it all finished in one evening. The effect upon the lives of the masses of the population would be exactly the same. As it is, they have to allow the "people" to have their "circuses" if not their "bread." The performance consists in *not* mentioning unemployment, the real plight of the farmer, the poverty of millions, the disfranchisement of the Negro, the race and national oppression, the growth of armaments, the militarization of the youth, imperialist policies abroad, the war danger, the holding of a whole people in the grip of a small number of finance kings.

These fundamental questions *must not exist*. One must make it appear that they are the inventions of unbalanced individuals who undermine our American institutions. The questions to be dangled

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before the eyes of the "mob" are: prohibition, the religious "issue," the past of Tammany Hall, Kellogg's peace treaties, farm relief (without ever stating the real needs of the exploited and distressed millions of land-tillers and without offering any definite solution—which is impossible under imperialist rule). The chief, the most absorbing, the most thrilling topic remains, after all, *a comparison of the candidates' personalities!* What an open field for arousing the popular interest, even to the point of bringing out unusual crowds to the polls. What a subject for newspaper orators, preachers! Here our national politics approach our other great pastime, the national sport.

7. Having thus created a wholly artificial interest among the masses; having lulled them with the repetition of the assertion of "national prosperity" and "national security," there remains for finance capital only one task—to instill into the masses *a fear of changes*. That, too, is being done in this campaign.

When the conviction has been spread that "all there is, is for the best," when the fetishism of institutions and persons has been inculcated by sheer repetition, the next thing to do is to declare that he who does not conform is an enemy and a traitor. Immediately, a "patriotic" mob may be ready to attack a Workers Party street platform.

8. The Socialist Party has entirely accepted the leadership of the forces of finance capital. It fits snugly into the pattern devised by Wall Street. But this topic deserves a separate essay.

* * *

The only party in the United States that is acually opposed to capitalism; *i. e.* to finance capital and imperialism, and that is expressing the fundamental interests and the insurgency of the masses, is the Workers (Communist) Party. There is an unfailing test by which it is possible to distinguish between service to capital and fighting capital, in this campaign as elsewhere: *Is a party accepting or rejecting the capitalist state* which is the power instrument of finance capital? *The Socialists accept the capitalist state.* This is why they are aiding capitalism no matter how their phrases may sound. The Communists are actually fighting the rule of the oppressors.

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The Presidential Elections of 1928

By ARNE SWABECK

IN MANY RESPECTS the coming presidential elections will mark points of greater interest than heretofore, as well as a beginning toward more clearly accentuating class issues in American politics. This is expressed in the following:

FIRST. In the general line-up of candidates and forces of the two major parties. Captains of industry and finance play a more direct and a more outstanding role, making a reality of the slogan "More Business in Government" and more than ever throwing off the fetters of bourgeois democracy. This in itself signifies not only the growth of power of American imperialism but also its more conscious and deliberate preparations to remain in power.

SECOND. In the almost complete elimination of issues of difference between these two parties and a marked beginning of their inner dissolution upon issues resembling a class character. This is a process so far held back mainly by the low level of development of the American working-class movement. It is a beginning of the disappearance of the reactionary two-party system.

THIRD. By the further and complete disappearance of any working-class semblance from the Socialist Party and the absence of any third party or labor party movement as a national, organized and political factor of consequence.

FOURTH. By the emergence of working-class issues as an integral part of the elections becoming apparent to important sections of the workers. Together with this, a better prepared and more conscious participation by the Workers (Communist) Party, raising the banner of revolutionary class struggle and becoming a greater political factor.

These four factors alone suffice to indicate a prelude to a more definite constellation of class forces and, viewed in connection with the growing industrial depression, also a sharpening of the class struggle.

BIG BUSINESS SHOWS ITS HAND

Unquestionably the selection of the presidential candidates and the committees to manage their campaigns shows more than ever the hands of Big Business, finance and industrial capital. Herbert

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Hoover, candidate of the leading party of capitalism, himself signifies Big Business in its most ruthless form despite the attempts to fasten the humanitarian halo onto his skull. On his campaign advisory boards are such men as Henry Ford, E. W. Litchfield, President of the Goodyear Tire and Rubber company, and others. The part played by the multi-millionaire, Andy Mellon, was not merely a secret backroom affair but performed in public view.

While strenuous, and possibly successful efforts will be made to have Al. Smith, the Democratic choice, continue in his pose as the peoples' man and friend of the workers, the selection of John J. Raskob as Chairman of the Democratic Party National Committee and Campaign Manager, with the assistance of such personalities of the financial world as Du Pont, Herbert H. Lehman, the Wall Street banker, and others, is not without significance. Raskob is Morgan's man, proclaimed heir to the mantle of the deceased Steel King, Elbert Gary, and vice-president of General Motors, the largest corporation in the world. The Democratic Party may now, fully as well as the Republican Party, lay claim to being the representative of Wall Street with the dominant capitalist-imperialists completely taking over the direction of its affairs.

The recent achievement of Dwight W. Morrow, Morgan's partner, now U. S. Ambassador to Mexico, in inducing President Calles to sponsor a bill which will make fundamental changes in the Mexican constitution to permit a new huge invasion of American capital into Mexico, may also be cited as one example of making a reality of the slogan "More Business in Government." It means a further aggression of American imperialism as well.

IDENTITY OF INTEREST OF MAJOR CAPITALIST PARTIES

The Workers (Communist) Party platform states:

> "There are no real political differences between the two big political parties. Both are parties of capitalism, both are the enemies of the working class."

An analysis will easily vindicate the truth of this contention. The modification by the Democratic Party of its tariff plank has almost made it identical with the Republican Party on that issue. While the platform of both parties are skillfully evasive and artfully straddle all real issues, except in their definiteness for continued capitalist control, on such issues as economic conditions, taxation, prohibition, etc., no differences can be found. On the question of farm relief both parties, serving Big Business, fail entirely to advance any measure or even take cognizance of the interests of the

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farmers. On the issues of imperialism and labor injunctions the difference is one only of phrases and form. This disappearance of differences is itself the most powerful proof of the beginning inner dissolution of the two old parties. As stated in our platform, "there is much more division within each party than real differences between them."

The divisions are mainly based upon economic and political interests, having already now in some respects a class character. Both parties break up horizontally in blocs. For instance the farm bloc, composed of elements from both parties, an industrial bloc, the so-called progressive bloc, the wet and dry blocs, the catholic and anti-catholic blocs, etc. It might be added that despite the ever-increasing capitalist domination of the bureaucracy of the American Federation of Labor and despite its reactionary "non-partisan" political policy there have at times been symptoms of third party and labor combinations. Even the "solid South" is breaking up. There are today within the two old parties plenty of indications of a break-down of the reactionary two-party system.

At the recent annual Commonwealth Conference of the University of Iowa a gathering of ninety political scientists, representing forty-eight of the American universities and colleges, conclusions were drawn that the present election campaign signalizes the collapse of the two-party system in American history and the birth of a new system of smaller parties.

THE S. P. REPUDIATES THE CLASS STRUGGLE

The deletion of the issue of the class struggle from its program by the Socialist Party at its last convention coincides with its more recent attitude, as expressed by its leading elements, at the New York Socialist Party state nominating convention. There the main appeal was made to the middle class, the small business men. It certainly is aspiring to become the third party of capitalism.

In struggles of the trade unions to maintain their organizations and working conditions against the combined onslaughts of the bosses and the reactionary officials, particularly within the needle trades, the Socialist Party has fully played that role. It has been a buffer between the bourgeoisie and the revolutionary workers.

In politics, the two-party system has so far sufficiently served the interests of American capitalism. With the rapid loss of working-class character and of working-class support, the Socialist Party may hardly become, for some time yet, an efficient capitalist safety valve in the sense in which the European Socialist Parties have been such.

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THE LABOR PARTY

The labor party movement as a nationally organized political factor is at a low ebb. Its existence as an independent force in the state of Minnesota and a few other isolated points will hardly be of any real consequence in the presidential elections. The gathering held in Chicago, July 10, for the announced purpose of launching a national farmer-labor ticket, was still-born. It had little farmer and less labor representation. Its candidate, Senator Norris, failed to head the ticket. The irregulars are becoming regulars.

There have been some recent mass struggles of the workers, as for instance the coal miners, the textile workers, among the workers of the needle trades and to a lesser degree in other industries. There is a growing industrial depression. Class issues are therefore becoming more apparent to important sections of workers and poorer farmers. For example the growing unemployment, due both to the industrial depression and to further rationalization of industry, the campaign for the destruction of the trade unions, the farm crisis, as well as issues of taxation and social legislation will undoubtedly come in for a greater share of attention by the workers and farmers in this election.

UNEMPLOYMENT

While production of the industries of the country have increased 26 per cent since 1919 and the individual output per man increased 42 per cent, due to rationalization and speed-up, the falling-off of employment is appalling. According to information given out by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor the decrease in factory employment between 1925 and 1928 is 1,874,-050. According to more recent information of a survey of 11,231 establishments in 54 of the principal manufacturing industries, the figures of the decrease of employment in percentages are as follows:

Taking the average for 1923 as 100 per month, the 1925 average showed 91.2, the 1926 average 91.9, the 1927 average 88.5 and the average for the first six months in 1928 was 85.4.

Surely the prosperity bubble is bursting. The constantly lowered living standard of the masses of workers, particularly in the heavy industries, through wage-cuts, speed-up and deterioration of working conditions in general, cannot be without effect upon the workers. Their mood for struggle is growing, their radicalization is noticeable, and there are prospects that it will be given increased class expression in the coming elections.

Particularly will this be true with the Workers (Communist) Party taking full advantage of the situation as the sole party de-

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fending the interests of the workers, as the only party raising the issues of the class struggle carrying forward the banner of proletarian revolution.

The history of the American labor movement during the last decades has been one of failing to keep step with the rapid consolidation of capitalism. While this consolidation has reached the point of a mighty empire, the level of development of the labor movement is still a very low one. The signs of radicalization of the workers are so far visible mainly in their economic struggles.

The traditional two-party system has in the past been the main factor preventing the development of such tendencies in politics. The American workers do participate in politics but not as a class. To develop a class attitude and class participation based on class issues is our first task.

THE ROLE OF THE WORKERS PARTY

This election will become a test of our Party's ability to apply its program of action. Our program contains demands in keeping with the economic needs of the workers. To apply it means to establish the closest possible contact between our propaganda for these demands with our participation and leadership in the fight for the elementary working-class needs as well as with our activities for working-class organization.

There is for example the problem of unemployment. The growing competition for world markets and the process of capitalist rationalization now definitely indicate the beginnings of a permanent industrial reserve army in this country. At present it is in its early stage and our activities have been very limited. Nevertheless only the Workers (Communist) Party is tackling this problem, so serious to the working class.

Our platform demands unemployment insurance, initiation of public works and reduction of working hours. When together with that, we more energetically pursue our campaign for class solidarity of employed and unemployed, and organization of the unemployed to more effectively fight for their needs, our Party will establish itself more firmly among these workers.

Our platform gives considerable attention to the bosses' attacks upon the trade unions. This has reached its most acute stage in the mining industry, with the destruction of the miners' union, but it is felt elsewhere. The attacks upon the working-class standard of living has become general. The forms of attack have varied from the cunning bribing of willing trade-union officials through class-collaboration schemes and company unionism to open onslaughts,

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mustering all the forces available, from economic pressure to courts, police and use of military forces.

Despite shortcomings our Party has already proven itself the only force capable of organizing effective resistance. It has led important struggles to save the trade unions, the standard of wages and working conditions, both from the attacks of the bosses and from the treasonable conduct of the labor lieutenants of capitalism. It has led the fight for amalgamation and militant union policies. It has now also made a beginning toward organization of the unorganized into new unions. These struggles themselves must become a direct part of our election campaign and become a means of helping to mobilize the workers for class political action.

The issues of government strike-breaking and anti-labor injunctions are very pertinent parts of our election campaign. The attitude of both major parties, while differing in form, is, as already stated, one of maintaining this system so indispensible to American capitalism and its continued possibility of keeping the workers in suppression. In some fields of struggle, notably in the late Pennsylvania and Ohio miners' strike, our Party has made its stand clear by actually making the first attempts to organize the workers for mass violation of injunctions and against the systematic strike-breaking. These examples will live in the memory of thousands of workers and lead them toward support of Communism in this election.

The growth of American imperialism and its war preparations are issues in this election. An effective counter-campaign can be expected only from a working-class party; in other words only from the Workers (Communist) Party. Our efforts so far in this respect have not nearly had a sufficiently broad working-class character. While carrying on our election propaganda, it is of the utmost importance that simultaneously the workers be actually set into motion against American imperialism and for the defense of the Soviet Union.

Social legislation is another matter deserving much more attention by our Party than heretofore. Nationally and in the various state and municipal governments, social legislation has been on the agenda at times in the past without our Party having taken any part.

It may be questions of workers' insurance or compensation bills, regulation of working hours by law, child labor laws, abolishment of yellow-dog contracts or injunctions, questions of school or taxation, etc. Issues may vary in the different localities necessitating a local color to our election campaign. In any event struggles for

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social legislation beneficial to the workers, combined with struggle for their economic needs, will help not only to expose the capitalist political methods of the trade-union bureaucracy but also the fraud of capitalist legislation itself.

Simple propaganda methods and popular propaganda literature is of inestimable value in an election campaign. With a backward working-class movement, as in the United States, it is so much more necessary. For a revolutionary party, however, an election campaign can never be a separate thing. It must be closely bound up with and become an integral part of the economic struggles of the workers. It is one form of political expression of these struggles, which will grow in intensity as the struggles develop. This political expression will naturally also sharpen in form and content and assume more of a mass character. It will become more of a direct contest for power simultaneously with this development.

When correctly applied, this becomes the method of combining political parliamentary activities with the non-parliamentary struggles of the workers; the method to maintain its revolutionary character and to ever broaden its class basis. It becomes a method to convince the working masses that all the evils they suffer today under capitalist production are inevitable outgrowths of capitalism itself and can only be removed through the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship.

Thus the Communist election campaign differs widely from that of any other party which may claim to represent the workers. Our participation in elections is a direct part of the struggle for the proletarian revolution. We are a small party in a large industrial country, ruled by the most powerful imperialist bureaucracy in the world. This merely means that the difficulties which we have to overcome are so much the greater. We even have remnants of our own past attitude toward parliamentary elections to struggle against. When we remember that as late as 1920 our Party issued the slogan of boycotting the elections (without any effect upon the workers) it is but natural that among our members there should still be somewhat of a dual attitude toward this question; one of accepting the necessity of participation without fully recognizing or utilizing the opportunities available.

Yet these present elections should, and surely will become a starting point toward the firm establishment of our Party as a political factor in the United States, capable of fulfilling its great historic mission of leading the working class to final victory.

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Obregon Assassinated

By JANET CORK

ALVARO OBREGON was elected president of Mexico on the first of July. On the 17th of July he was assassinated. The political developments of the next two weeks resemble a crazy quilt in kaleidoscopic motion. Heterogeneous, unstable elements held together by the military chieftain begin to pull apart. The Army, Mexico's wavering, capricious force, divided in its allegiance — Joaquin Amaro, Minister of War, a pro-Morones man, Francisco Manzo, in command of 25,000 troops in the western sector, a militant Obregonite. The workers and peasants, unsteady, the entire population stunned.

What will happen next? With tensest excitement Mexico watches the chronicle of events unroll:

July 17—Obregon assassinated! Who was responsible?

July 18—Soto y Gama and Aurelio Manrique, leaders of the National Agrarista Party, extreme right wingers of the Obregon group, accuse the Laborites, stage a huge protest demonstration and demand their punishment. President Calles answers their accusation by the removal of his Chief of Police, Cruz, substituting "Zertuche," an Obregon man, to take full charge of the investigation.

July 19—Calles charges that Toral, the religious fanatic, is solely responsible for the crime.

On the same day the Mexican Communist Party issues a manifesto to the workers and peasants declaring that they condemn the assassination of Obregon, and reject individual terror as a method in the class struggle because it cannot solve the problems of the workers and peasants. The manifesto warns that the political moment will divide the political leaders into different factions which will try to use the proletariat as a sacrifice. They urge the workers to turn their backs on the bourgeois political leaders and false "revolutionaries" whose acts are motivated solely by personal ambitions, to follow the representatives of their own class, the leaders of the peasants' and workers' organizations. They point out the necessity for all workers and peasants forming a united block to fight for:

1. Complete distribution of the land.
2. Disarming of white guards employed by landowners and mining and oil companies.
3. Effective nationalization of the sub-soil.
4. Workers' control of production and distribution.

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5. Complete arming of workers and peasants.
6. Extermination of the remnants of the Catholic rebellion.
7. Effective application of workers' insurance and application of the few proletarian conquests of the revolution which until today are only dead letters in the Constitution.
8. A workers and peasants block of North, Central and South America to struggle against finance imperialism.

The manifesto concludes by saying that now when the national bourgeoisie has sold out to foreign capital, "now that imperialism is advancing with rapid strides and putting an end to the historic revolutionary role of the petit-bourgeoisie in Mexico, now more than ever do we need a workers and peasants block to guide our own destinies."

The National Peasants League, one million organized peasants under the control of the leadership of the Mexican Communist Party and affiliated with the Peasants International, sends a message offering to support Calles in the present crisis.

July 20—All workers' organizations throughout Mexico pledge support to Calles.

July 21—The National Peasants League issues manifesto accusing the Catholic clergy of responsibility for the murder. It further states that the aim of the church is not only to threaten the revolution but to confuse the revolutionary elements — to create a state of affairs which would destroy the workers' and peasants' organizations and rob them of their revolutionary gains. The manifesto concludes by calling on the entire country to support Calles, and upon the workers and peasants to demand the nationalization of church property for the use of rural schools, "popular universities," agricultural experimental schools and peasants' homes."

On the same day—July 21—Soto y Gama and Manrique stage a huge demonstration parade demanding the dismissal of Morones from the cabinet and the other Crom leaders from the remaining government posts. It must be remembered that Soto y Gama and Manrique stand at the extreme right of the Obregon group, representing the middle peasantry—or better said—the comfortable farmer. Their program includes reparation of land but is conditioned by proper compensation. They are hostile to Mexican labor groups, especially to its yellow leadership.

For four years Soto y Gama, Manrique and others have been out of power—ousted by Morones and kept out by Calles. Obregon's advent to power would have meant rich spoils for them. They are most embittered by this unexpected turn of events, and are trying to patch up all kinds of alliances with the feudal and Catholic

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reaction, wooing disgruntled military elements, especially General Manzo of Sonora. They are making overtures to General Topete, Obregon's leader in Congress. In the demonstration on the 21st they openly threatened Calles with revolt unless he removed Morones.

July 22—Morones, Minister of Commerce, Labor and Industry in the Calles cabinet, resigns. His resignation is followed by that of Gasca, in charge of Government Munitions, and Eduardo Moneda, head of the Government Printing Plant. The statement accompanying the resignation expresses the wish to give Calles and the government a free hand in the investigation.

July 23—The Obregon group controlling a majority in congress discusses the presidential succession. Who shall be the provisional president for the next two years? Calles or Aaron Saenz? Soto y Gama declares that the Agrarista Party will not permit Calles to remain in the presidency beyond December 1st.

July 25—Calles makes a speech to the Army congratulating it on its loyalty to the Government and repeats his charge that Obregon was assassinated by a criminal, armed by the clergy.

July 26—Aaron Saenz, one of the Sonora group, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, and chief of Obregon's political campaign returns from Obregon's funeral. He attempts to restrain the extremist wing in his group and to allay hostility against Calles. He makes a statement demanding "unity of all revolutionary forces for the development of Obregon's program" and urges complete solidarity with the president. He omits mentioning or attacking Morones in this declaration which considerably strengthens Calles' position.

July 27—Ten days have passed since the assassination. Thus far Calles and Saenz have outmanoeuvered the Obregon extremists, have weakened them and taken away part of their following. This has forced Soto y Gama to make a bid for the poorer peasant support and they have issued a more radical program which declares that the "Confederation of Obregon Parties" — the COPOR (largely led by Soto y Gama and Manrique) will fight for land distribution, rural education, better roads, labor legislation, but must emphasize the "necessity of purifying the revolutionary movement through the relentless elimination" of the official labor leaders.

July 28—The Obregon majority removes the "laborites" from all municipal posts in the Federal district.

During all these heated days Calles has been quietly mending his position. His earlier concessions to the extreme right seemed like complete capitulation, but in reality, judging from present developments they may be interpreted as an attempt to secure a breathing

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spell—to keep the country from civil war. That he worked with great deftness is proved by the fact that on August 6, the official Obregon Center was closed. In this brief space of time Calles was able to neutralize the worst extremist opposition and to protect his "labor" group. In closing the Obregon Center, Aaron Saenz declared that the Obregonites placed complete faith in Calles and Congress, confident that the crime would be properly investigated and punished. This statement permitted Calles to push more aggressively his preparations for the next session of Congress.

The news that comes on August 14th states that Luis Leon, former Minister of Agriculture in the Calles cabinet, removed for malfeasance of public funds, close friend of Morones, is returned to his post. This is another defeat for the extremists, Soto y Gama and Manrique.

The present reorganization of the cabinet indicates no further concessions to this extreme wing. It is affirmed that Adalberto Tejeda, liberal governor of Vera Cruz—supporter of the National Peasants League—will return to the Ministry of the Interior which is one of the most strategic positions in the cabinet. Roberto Cruz, former Chief of Police, dismissed right after the assassination, has been given military command of the State of Sinaloa—thus breaking Obregonite military hold on Western Mexico. Calles is also planning to control the next Congress by refusing to recognize credentials of elements hostile to him and the "labor" group. A majority in congress will permit him to choose the next president.

CLASS FORCES IN MEXICO

It is difficult to understand the significance of the above events, so briefly sketched, without a hasty background of Mexican economics and politics during the last decade at least. Briefly summarized—the last ten years have produced a loosely organized working class but this working class is divided. On the one hand the Mexican Federation of Labor (CROM) led by Morones and his satellites, on the other a number of independent unions. The CROM is a class-collaboration organization *par excellence*. Not only does it make alliances with its own bourgeoisie but also with American finance capital. Morones has repeatedly refused to organize the workers employed by American interests. Therefore most of the oil workers, a majority of the textile workers, all the miners, and the railway confederation belong to independent unions.

In the recent struggle of the Jalisco miners the CROM made an alliance with the Catholic unions to break the strike of the indepen-

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dent miners. *El Machete*, the organ of the Mexican Communist Party, published a series of sensational documents exposing the relations between the CROM and the Catholic rebels in Jalisco and proving that the CROM had furnished arms to the Catholics against the miners.

Opposed to the ideology of the CROM leadership are the independent unions of railway workers, oil workers, textile workers and miners. These base themselves on the class struggle. They have had a difficult uphill fight against foreign interests in Mexico. Everytime they declared a strike President Calles would use Morones to break it.

On the Agrarian field—The last eighteen years of revolution and suffering have produced a partially armed peasantry. For a long time they were militant in a sort of hit-and-miss way. During the last five years, however, over a million have been organized into the National Peasants League, under the direction of Communists and affiliated with the Peasants International. This makes them a powerful force in Mexican politics and considerably lessens the importance of the army and reduces its capacity for irresponsible mischief.

The Agrarian field, however, is also divided. There is a National Agrarista Party, a political organization, under the direction of Soto y Gama, which although it really represents the well-to-do farmers, nonetheless in its program and official statements uses revolutionary phraseology to confuse the peasants and divide them; and by this means it has acquired a peasant following controlled by the well-to-do farmers. This party stands against the program of land distribution to the peasants.

In close relation to the above economic groups stand the foreign interests. They are the worst exploiters in Mexico and often provoke the militant workers and peasants to strike or fight. This is where the yellow labor and peasant leaders come in. A Mexican president, if he is to remain president, must know how to jockey between the demands of the militant workers and peasants on the one hand and the ruthless pressure of foreign capital on the other. The president alone is incapable of such a feat; so he constructs a cabinet to assist him. In his cabinet he must have someone identified with labor, who can keep labor docile; someone who can put the brakes on the militants. That is why Calles chose Luis Morones as his Minister of Commerce and Labor. Morones has acquitted himself with honors as strikebreaker and traitor to his own class.

As for the peasantry—the presence of Adelberto Tejeda in the

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Calles cabinet was a sort of sop to the poor peasants. In case of militancy Calles could count on him to attempt to keep them in check.

This sketch of Mexico's present political structure gives one an uneasy feeling—it appears to be such an unstable combination (almost upset) in the present crisis. It is stated, however, by those acquainted with Mexican affairs, that under present conditions, it is the only kind of combination which can offer peace. That this is so, is proven by the fact that Calles at this very moment is reconstructing his cabinet along these lines.

Why has he protected the labor leaders? The foregoing facts answer the question. He still needs Morones, he still finds him essential to the development and consolidation of the national bourgeoisie and to help keep the peace with foreign interests. And although Calles accepted Morones' resignation, it is an open secret that the Labor Departments of the Government, Munitions and Printing are still run by labor men under the guidance of Morones and his friends. Before many months have passed, Morones will be back in another official position.

There are some who contend that American imperialism is trying to build a coalition between the petit-bourgeoisie, the Catholic Church and the remnants of feudalism in Mexico. There are others, close to Mexican events, who maintain that the remnants of feudalism are so small and politically so unimportant that they are not worth wooing, that representatives of the Church would be the upsetting element in the government, for the workers and peasants could less easily be fooled then; that such a coalition would be extremely unstable—incapable of insuring peace. And since "peace" permits of more intensive exploitation and greater profits it seems logical for foreign interests to maintain the present combination—a petit-bourgeois "labor-agrarian" coalition.

Statements that Morrow has supported Calles in his defense of Morones against the extreme right of the Obregon group bear out this contention. The present reconstruction of the Calles cabinet along these same lines, further strengthens this view.

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A Reply to Eastman's "Marx, Lenin and the Science of Revolution"

By A. CHIIK

MAX EASTMAN'S name is not unknown to our readers. He achieved some notoriety as a renegade from Communism, a counter-revolutionary bourgeois journalist, when he published in the bourgeois press of Europe and America a series of articles full of every kind of fabrication and slander against the Communists. These articles were collected and published under the title "Since Lenin Died." The book was one of the first steps in the malicious campaign against Soviet Russia which the capitalists and the capitalist press have of late been carrying on in every country with renewed energy.

Recently Eastman published a new book under the bombastic title *Marx, Lenin and the Science of Revolution.* In this book he attempts a scientific criticism of the teachings and activities of Lenin and Lenin's party in the Soviet Union—"a criticism of certain phases of the revolutionary dictatorship in Russia."

"I trust," Eastman writes in the preface, "it will be obvious that this criticism is sympathetic, and in no sense a political attack."

Thus the author recommends his book to his readers.

But the book itself tells another story. In the tremendous mass of anti-Bolshevist literature it will be hard to find such a masterpiece of ignorance and animosity, such a collection of deliberate distortion, scientific hypocrisy, and crafty journalistic scholastics.

The protestations of the author regarding his sympathies for the Soviet government, his disinclination toward making any political attacks, are certainly very appropriate for deceiving working-class readers. But they are simply empty words. The entire book, from beginning to end, is full of lies and calumnies of the worst kind.

In the preface to his book Eastman boasts that he has studied Russian Bolshevist literature in the original Russian. But every line of his book bears witness to the fact that during his visit to Russia he was evidently so busy collecting the gossip published by him later in his first "work," that very little time was left for anything else. What little Russian literature Eastman had time for, he read very carelessly and superficially. This is clearly shown by his numerous crude distortions of historical facts, and his frequent and

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utterly absurd interpretations of well-known facts in the history of the Russian revolution and of the most basic principles and methods of Bolshevist policy.

Here are a few gems of Eastman's ignorance and spite which will give a rough idea of his method of "scientific investigation."

Characterizing the Narodniki,[1] he reduces their entire program to their denial of the importance of the industrial proletariat, but entirely ignores even such questions as that of capitalism in Russia, the role of the village mir, terror, etc. (Page 152)

In writing of the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Party,[2] he says that in considering the party program, the majority supported Lenin (page 147).

"During the months preceding the revolution," he writes, "pursuing his essential policy of sharp turns, Lenin was once *on the point* of abandoning altogether the slogan "All Power to the Soviets" (Page 159—Italics mine, A. C.)

It is a well known fact that after July, Lenin and the Bolsheviks actually did temporarily abandon the slogan, but Eastman is unaware of this. He also seems to know nothing about Lenin's article on *Slogans*, translated into both German and English.

Since the October Revolution a "significant change" he says, "has taken place in the Soviet system. The highest power in the country has been "gradually shifted from the Soviet of People's Commissars, the highest organ of the Soviet structure, to the 'Politburo,' the highest organ of the Communist Party." (page 161).

"The party occupies a position in the new state not unlike that occupied by the personal sovereign in the old." (page 162).

According to Eastman the members and heads of the Russian Communist party talk a great deal about the services of Lenin to the development of Marxism, and his role in human history, but pay little attention to the role of the party (!)—"They rarely mention its (the party's) relation to society, and almost never (!) that peculiar policy which it applied so successfully." (page 160).

It is clear to everyone that if Eastman had conscientiously taken the trouble to read even one of the most elementary political primers he could not have written such nonsense.

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[1] *Narodniki*—Representatives of the Populist (petit-bourgeois) Socialism among the revolutionary intelligentsia. The People's Will Party in the 80's and the Socialist-Revolutionist Party (1900-1917) were the political organizations of the Narodniki.

[2] The Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party at which under the leadership of Lenin the division into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks took place, was held in 1903.

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Eastman's "scientific work" consists simply of an interminable array of distorted facts, deliberate misrepresentations of the views of Revolutionary Marxists-Leninists, lies and slander about the proletarian state. All of this is wrapped up in a mystical and finely woven veil of "scientific analysis" and terribly "learned" arguments. Eastman's object is to seduce working-class readers unversed in science, unable to analyze the absurd fabrications presented to them in the guise of high philosophy, into acceptance of this counter-revolutionary gibberish in place of the real article.

But the veil is woven of extremely fine gauze. It is too transparent.

The first part of Eastman's book is devoted to a "critique" of Marx. We will not dwell in detail on that section of the book. It is impossible to take seriously the judgment of a person who himself openly acknowledges that he understands nothing of the philosophy he is criticizing. Regarding the dialectic philosophy for instance, Eastman makes the following astonishing statement:

"It is one of the most indubitable virtues of this philosophy that *nobody can find out exactly what it is*. Hegelianism is like a mental disease—you cannot know what it is until you get it, and then you can't know it because you've got it." (page 23). Or, for instance, expounding his "arguments" against the economic teachings of Marx, he adds: "That is my opinion, which I ought to warn the reader is amateur and inexpert in matters of economic theory (page 95).

That he actually understands nothing either of the philosophy of Hegel or the teachings of Marx is strikingly clear not only from his own confession but also from the entire book.

Eastman does not understand at all that the *method* of a philosophy and its *content* are two different things, closely bound together, to be sure, but for all that not identical. He simply confuses the dialectic method of Hegel with the idealistic content of his system, and attributes his own ignorance to everybody else, including Marx. To cap the climax, he attributes to Marx not only Hegel's *method*, but also Hegel's *idealistic views*, which Marx specifically and categorically repudiated.

Naturally, having no conception of the meaning of method, Eastman disdains to make any distinctions between *dialectic* materialism and *mechanical* materialism. However, he is unable to erase from history these two trends of thought and is forced to crawl out of the dilemma he has created for himself by the following trick: He *denies the existence of the materialistic character* of dialectic materialism. According to Eastman, dialectic materialism is not material-

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istic but merely dialectic, and the dialectic is *idealistic*. On the other hand, Eastman denies the *metaphysical mechanical character* of natural scientific materialism and reduces all its teachings to *natural science* pure and simple. Eastman represents matters as if *dialectic materialism* were materialism in words only and opposed to scientific materialism.

"Marx and Engels violently repudiated the materialism of natural science, calling it abstract, mechanical, and even shallow and vulgar. Marx and Engels were defending against scientific materialism — against that attitude which constitutes the simple common sense starting point of science—a materialistic religion."

Thus, according to Eastman, the philosophy of Marx is no philosophy at all, but a peculiar variety of animism, a materialistic religion, differing from the idealistic philosophy of Hegel only in its materialistic phraseology, and from idealistic religions only in that it lacks the most valuable attribute of the latter—any emotional element of an exalted ethical nature.

The Marxist materialistic interpretation of history, according to Eastman, represents nothing more than the acceptance of the principles of the Hegelian philosophy of history. Marx borrowed from Hegel, he contends, the proposition that "history is the only process having some one cause, other than the conscious purposes of men, which explains it all; and that this cause has the property of being logical in its development, and of advancing by contradictions, and the negation of the negation." The difference between Hegel and Marx resides conclusively in the fact that the latter "found the ultimate one cause not in the evolving idea but in the evolving forces of production." In other words: The Hegelian philosophy of history leads to a metaphysical proposition, stating that "spirit is the only moving principle of history," while the Marxian philosophy of history leads to the not less metaphysical although less exalted (!) assertion that "the forces of production are the only moving principle in history." "Neither of these absolute statements has any basis in fact or probability"—declares Eastman. (page 62). In support of this statement Eastman brings forward a series of "arguments" which all lead to one thing: He carefully demonstrates that the forces of production are not the "*only*" and "*exclusive*" "moving principle" of history.

That Eastman's "critique" of Marxism is pure nonsense, a futile tilting against wind-mills, is borne out by his own admission of ignorance.

(*To Be Continued*)

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Unemployment In France

By C. WHITE

(Concluded from the August Communist)

THE UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION

During the years 1919-1923, the reconstruction of the devastated districts made unemployment practically non-existent in France. The situation was similar from 1923 to 1926 when inflation was very favorable to French exports.

From 1919 to 1925 the earnings of the workers were in general equivalent to pre-war earnings. If we describe the cost of living in terms of retail prices of the main articles of consumption we see that in Paris (from 1914-25) retail prices fluctuated from 100 to 400 points. At the same time wages fluctuated from 100 to 370 points (minimum) and from 100 to 500 points (maximum). If we represent the price of gold in 1925 by 1 point, wages and prices of certain commodities in Paris can be visualized as follows:

WAGES		PRICES	
Miners	0.92	Meat (retail)	1.24
Carpenters	0.60	" (wholesale)	1.05
Metal workers	0.75	Sugar	1.32
Masons	0.72	Cotton (dom.)	1.60
Wood turners	0.81	" (world)	1.65
		Wheat	0.83
Average wages	0.87	*Average prices*	0.89

During the first half of 1926, the situation remained very similar (retail prices fluctuated from 460 to 485). At the beginning of Poincare's regime (July 25th to the middle of November) stabilization had no great detrimental effect upon the general economic situation, for the reason that prices had not yet adjusted themselves to the changes resulting from the deflation of the franc (from 246 francs to the Pound sterling in July to 125 francs in December). In spite of the slowing down of some of the manufacturing industries: shoe-making, silk, clothing, furnishings, paper mills, chocolate, etc.; heavy industry had benefited by the English strike. There was very little unemployment and the wages of native workers did not appear to be any lower than before the war. Then retail prices fluctuated from 485 points in the second quarter of 1926 to 515 points in the second quarter of 1927. This was followed by an increase in the cost of living of 6 per cent. Simul-

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taneously wages for 1927 dropped from 10 to 20 per cent. In other words the unavoidable crisis brought about by financial stabilization began to make itself felt, and as a result of these first attempts at rationalization, partial and total unemployment had become serious weapons in the hands of the capitalists for wage reductions. "A motor car factory, writes *Intransigeant*, "has decreased its production and hired new workers at lower wages than before."

As a matter of fact France for many years had been faced with a serious unemployment situation. It was difficult to arrive at accurate figures because there had never been accurate trade-union or other statistics to compare with those of England or Germany. According to the Ministry of Labor only about 8 out of 31 Labor Exchanges had begun to give relief in towns, while in the rural districts only 61 out of a total of 233 had begun to function.

The relief given was farcical, 4 1|2 francs for a father; less for his wife, and still less for his children. The maximum is 12 francs a day for a family, yet for the support of a family 20 francs a day are almost starvation wages.

Owing to the fact that so many Labor Exchanges were not functioning and also to the fact that after a period of 120 days all benefits were stopped, the official figures given by the government were always far from accurate. The true figures for unemployment at the end of the first quarter of 1927 were between 200,000 and 300,000. On the 16th of March, 1927, 82,000 workers were receiving unemployment relief in 120 of the largest towns of France, and there are in France 36,000 towns, 605 of which have a population of over 5,000 persons.

Already large contingents of foreign workers were being deported to their native lands. In White Hungary, camps were established where these deported workers were left in quarantine, to enable Horthy's agents to throw into jail all those suspected of Bolshevism. Side by side with total unemployment, part time employment was flourishing in many industries.

However by the end of March, 1927, official statistics showed a steady decrease of unemployed in receipt of relief. The figures fell to 65,000 by the middle of April and to 47,000 by the middle of May. This situation was brought about by the continuous deportation of contingents of foreign-born (a few thousands each week), and to a great increase of workers employed part time, as well as to seasonal activities in all spheres of production. Retail prices had fallen 507 points in the third quarter of 1927, a decrease of 5.50 per cent. It goes without saying that this insignificant

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decrease in the cost of living could not compensate the hundreds of thousands of workers being employed only part time during this period, with correspondingly lower wages.

In September, the official number of persons receiving relief had fallen to 14,000. At the same time part-time work was increasing in all industries. 18 to 25 hours a week in the textile industry; four days a week in the sugar industry; four days in the small steel instrument industry. Owing to a decrease of from 30 to 50 per cent in the imports of iron, steel and copper, lead and nickel, in the course of 1927, the metal industries manufacturing these metals which employed more than a million workers were cutting down their stocks and curtailing activities. Statistics also showed a decrease in importations of raw materials in textiles, paper, paste, skins, etc. Alongside of this decrease in imports, went an increase in exports of manufactured products, showing that French industry was giving up the "home market" and was selling abroad. Heavy industry was exporting only 8 per cent less than in 1926.

The deportation of foreign workers had been a means for lessening the after-effects of stabilization, but it would be a mistake to figure on these deportations going on forever. One must not forget that foreign labor power is cheaper and more disciplined. (Owing to collective contracts with French capitalists). Most of the deported foreign workers were those organized into revolutionary trades unions, or sympathetic to them, and it is quite logical that French capitalists will keep the remainder of the foreign workers until they succeed in reducing the wages and living conditions of the French proletariat to a level satisfactory to the needs of industrial capital in competition on the world market.

According to official statistics the situation improved during the winter months. Only 12,900 people received relief in March, 1928, as against 18,000 for January, and only 25,000 were unable to get work as against 33,000 six weeks before. Part time has also decreased in both the metal and textile industries. Many orders have lately been received for locomotives from the P. L. M. and North French Railway Companies; cars have also been delivered to Alsace-Lorraine and Morocco. But these improvements are very precarious when we realize the struggle which will have to be made against a well-equipped German industry, when we recall the proposals for a protective tariff in England, and when we observe the daily efforts of America to secure new markets. Moreover the protection of French agriculture has already caused a rise in prices which is forcing the workers to fight for increased wages. All of

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these factors will seriously retard the exportation of industrial products.

CONCLUSION

The above conditions have actually been brought about by Poincare's policy of stabilization and rationalization. At the time this article is being written, the French General Election has just taken place. Poincare has again been victorious, the majority of the French electors not yet having realized that the stabilization of the franc does not mean the stabilization of capitalism in France. However, there is every reason to believe that Poincare will remain the Premier of "Big Business" and continue his policy of stabilization and rationalization.

What therefore are the economic prospects for France? From the above analysis we see them briefly as follows: The slowing down of industrial production; the decrease of industrial exports; an increase in the cost of living owing to agricultural tariffs and indirect taxes; complete or partial unemployment among hundreds of thousand of workers; under-consumption of both agricultural and industrial products by the home market; intensification of colonial exploitation; attacks on wages and hours of work.

The intensification of the class struggle at home will lead to the persecution of the militant workers, both native and foreign. In the international field, the war danger becomes more and more iminent because of competition for world markets, the unsettled war debts and the desire of world capitalism to crush the Workers Republic of Russia.

In the meantime unemployment is the most pressing evil, threatening as it does the wages of employed workers. To bring division in the ranks of the proletariat is one of the essential purposes of rationalization. The French Revolutionary Trade Unions (C. G. T. U.) affiliated to the R. I. L. U., therefore have begun to fight for the formation of factory committees to fight the master class at the point of production. The program includes:

a) Stopping of piece work on dangerous machines; prohibition of the "conveyor system" of work for women and boys under 21; rest periods on "conveyor systems" of work to avoid physical and mental exhaustion, at the same time diminishing the possibilities of accidents and occupational diseases.

b) Better hygienic conditions; paid holiday of 21 days.

c) Dismissal of workers and closing down of factories to be under the control of factory committees.

d) 44 hours a week with further reductions following technical improvements to re-integrate the unemployed into industry.

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e) Maintenance of the 8 hour day; increase of wages and their adaptation to the cost of living.

f) The carrying on of agitation among foreign and colonial workers to recruit them into the revolutionary trade unions.

With this program the metallurgical workers are setting the example for all other groups of workers. When conditions are ripe for the organization of a national movement of the unemployed, that organization will be closely bound up with the revolutionary trade unions. A National Program for the Unemployed will be immediately drawn up including the demand for full maintenance by the state at full union wages.

The fight against rationalization and its consequences will unite all workers belonging to both revolutionary and reformist trade unions. It will form a *united front from below* since the reformist trade-union leaders in France as everywhere else are more concerned with collaborating with the capitalists in order to stabilize capitalism at the expense of the workers than in fighting it. These leaders have praised the coming of rationalization in France, celebrating the American Paradise at Ford's and elsewhere and attempting to dope the French workers with the tale of "The American Worker and his Motor Car."

During 1927 many strikes sprang up in various parts of France but these were defeated or sabotaged by the reformist leaders. Lately however, there has been an intensification of these spontaneous strikes and the Amsterdam International leaders have been unsuccessful in breaking the united movement of factory workers belonging to the two different organizations. Some strikes have already been won; others are still going on. The united front from below is the first step toward the formation of a huge mass trade-union movement in France which will be in a better position to centralize and direct all industrial fights.

When the masses will have realized the significance of the capitalist state in all industrial disputes, they will understand that the final struggle is a political struggle for the smashing up of the capitalist state and the establishment of a workers' state. They will see the need of following the leadership of a strong, centralized and disciplined mass political party. The French General Election of April 29th, at which the French Communist Party had to fight the united forces of capitalism and social democracy, shows that this Party will be that mass political party that will lead the French workers to their emancipation.

[The End]

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Notes on American Literature

By JOSEPH FREEMAN

(*Concluded from the August Communist*)

PROPHETS OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION

GORHAM B. MUNSON, a young critic at one time connected with the aesthetic group of the *Dial*, has published a series of literary essays outlining the attitude of the "younger generation" of American writers. He divides contemporary American writers according to a chronological pattern and finds that they fall into three generations.

The Elder Generation is represented by two conservative critics, Professor Paul Elmer More and Professor Irving Babbit of Harvard University. The Middle Generation is represented in aesthetics by J. E. Spingarn; in fiction by Theodore Dreiser and Sherwood Anderson; in the drama by Eugene O'Neill; in poetry by Carl Sandburg and Edgar Lee Masters; and in criticism by Van Wyck Brooks and H. L. Mencken. The Younger Generation in Munson's pattern is represented in fiction by Ernest Hemingway and Glenway Wescott; in poetry by E. E. Cummings; in criticism by Kenneth Burke.

He finds that the Elder Generation is characterized by extensive scholarship, hatred of romanticism, classical religion and classical humanism, and conservatism in general outlook. The Middle Generation, he says, was rebellious and emotional; it favored socialism and other humanitarian movements and went in for the "craze" of psychoanalysis. Its novels were naturalistic and its criticism impressionistic. The Younger Generation is suspicious of the enthusiasms of the Middle Generation, and has raised the question: "Are there any new ideas which could be introduced into the minds of our writers, ideas of another order than those to which they are now accustomed, which might have the effect of stimulating American literature to rise to a new level?"

Munson undertakes to answer this question by proposing the "idea" of a quest for "perfection in both literature and character of living." In this he makes a healthy departure from the Wilsonian group, many of whom tended to set art beyond life as a city of refuge. As part of his "new" program Munson urges "the growth of a profound and embracing skepticism" and the cultivation of "common sense," which is a decision common to the intellect, the

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emotions and the practical instincts." He defines this idea further as "totality of view, impartiality, and purposiveness of writing and reading," and acknowledges the intellectual leadership of Professors More and Babbit, whom he calls "the two most mature intellects in American letters."

Professor More is an old critic who edited the *Nation* some twenty years ago when it was a reactionary journal. He has published a number of volumes on literature and philosophy under the common title "Shelbourne Essays." Munson describes him as a "Platonist with a Victorian education" and a "religious dualist." We should describe him as a mystic. More believes that "we are not alone in the universe," that "forces beat upon us from every side and are as really existent to us as ourselves; their influence upon us we know, but their own secret name and nature we have not yet heard. . . ." He therefore urges that we "hold our judgment in a state of complete suspense in regard to the correspondence of our inner experience with the world at large, neither affirming nor denying, while we accept honestly the dualism of consciousness as the irrational fact."

More's metaphysic formulates clearly the "profound and embracing skepticism" which Munson attributes to the younger generation of American writers, and perhaps many of them even share his motives, if not his formulation, when he says that "submission to the philosophy of change is the real effeminacy; it is the virile part to react." In More they find a Platonist who rejects the Utopian implications of the *Republic* and a religious dualist who discards the "love" of Christ, giving them only a lofty and erudite snobbishness.

Professor Babbit, the other *maitre* of the younger conservative writers, is more earthly. His first book was a practical attempt to solve certain educational problems which confronted him as a teacher of literature. His second book *The New Laokoon* attempts to make precise distinctions among the arts. This was followed by *Masters of Modern French Criticism*, which deals with the general problems of literary criticism and fires the first shots in his war against the romantic spirit in art and life. His fourth book *Rousseau and Romanticism* analyses the problem of the imagination, and, from an attack on the romantic imagination, proceeds to certain political conclusions which are elaborated in his latest book *Democracy and Leadership*.

We have here, then, a practical imagination which moves logically from education and literature to politics and economics. The

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attitude Munson admires in Babbit is his conviction that art and literature "should stand in vital relation to human nature as a whole and are not to be considered as forms of 'play' after occupation with scientific analysis"; his opposition to spontaneity and reveries, the "vogue of suggestion in art"; his attacks on "hypnosis for the sake of hypnosis, illusion for the sake of illusion"; his preference for the "ordered ethical imagination" as against "the anarchic imagination."

All this bears a striking resemblance to some of the doctrines of Mayakovsky, Brick, Tretyakov, Meyerhold and Eisenstein. The difference lies in the purpose of this intellectual discipline. For Professor Babbit it is the instrument of extremely reactionary social aims. He despises not only the faith in humanitarian "love" (as symbolized by Rousseau) but also the faith in scientific progress (as symbolized by Francis Bacon). He scorns the "illusion" that "because we are advancing rapidly in one direction we are advancing rapidly in all directions." Though no two minds were ever further apart, he finds that Rousseau and Bacon are fundamentally alike because both denied "something more than nature," both believed in "change, relativity, and endless motion"; and both thought that "mankind is progressing toward a Utopia," to be achieved, according to Bacon, by the perfecting of machinery; according to Rousseau "by the cultivation of an all-embracing love."

However else they may differ, then, More, Babbit and those younger writers who follow them agree in their hatred of social progress. Thus Babbit, mixing his contempt for the sentimental bourgeois reformer with his revulsion for social change in general, attacks the "romanticist" who affirms "the natural goodness of man, transfers the blame for man's shortcomings upon a vicious artificial society, and declares that man can reach perfectibility simply by tempering his egoism with universal pity." Romanticism, he finds, distrusts the intellect and denies the will, believes in the "original spontaneous genius," and under the guise of "humanitarianism" sympathizes with mankind in a lump.

Babbit, in contrast, finds man by nature indolent; he sees man torn by a "real civil war between his natural self and his human self for which *society cannot be held responsible.*" The implication is an old one: men in the mass are poor not because there is anything wrong with the social structure but because of their personal limitations. A definite social attitude is also implied in Babbit's sensible campaign to have the youth think and will, and to replace the "romanticist" by the "humanist" who expresses "not

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his unique accidental self but the self that is common to him and all other men."

But here we must raise the question: What is the "common self" of all men? Has it no connection with the "artificial society" in which men live? Do social classes play no role? Whose thought and will is being considered, and toward what *end* this thinking and willing?

Babbit lays his cards on the table in *Democracy and Leadership*. Here he attempts to solve several contemporary political problems, and in confusion clings to the apron-strings of religion. Nevertheless, he is certain of a few things: he knows, for example, that Karl Marx was wrong in "identifying work with value," when, as "everybody" knows, this "is determined by the law of supply and demand and by competition."

Lest some reader might think that Professor Babbit teaches in Zanzibar it should be made clear that Harvard University is located in the United States, a country with the biggest trusts in the world which have succeeded tolerably well in regulating the "laws" of supply and demand and competition. But perhaps it is good for Professor Babbit to forget where he is living, for he is all in favor of "competition." He even knows that the attempt to "eliminate competition has resulted in Russia in a ruthless despotism, on the one hand, and a degrading servitude on the other."

The aim of Babbit's thought and will becomes visible. "Thinking" and "willing" have been the prerogatives of leaders, and Babbit has something to say about leaders—especially bad leaders. He is, in fact, a connoisseur of leaders, for he urges us to note "a difference between the bad leadership of the past and that of the modern revolutionary era. The leaders of the past have most frequently been bad in the violation of the principles they professed; whereas it is when a Robspierre or a Lenin sets out to apply his principles that the man who is interested in the survival of civilization has reason to tremble."

THE IDEOLOGY OF FASCISM

The aim, then, is to stifle "romanticism," destroy the belief in human progress as symbolized by Rousseau, Francis Bacon, Karl Marx, Robespierre and Lenin, steel the intellect and the will toward fascism.

And this is no mere deduction from Babbit's general point of view; he states his politics explicitly. The time may come, he says in *Democracy and Leadership*, "with the growth of a false liberal-

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ism, when a predominant ballot-box and representative government, of constitutional limitations and judicial control, will display a growing eagerness for direct action. This is the propitious moment for the imperialistic leader. Though the triumph of any type of imperialistic leader is a disaster, especially in a country like our own, that has known the blessings of liberty under the law, nevertheless there is a choice even here. Circumstances may arise when we may esteem ourselves fortunate if we get the American equivalent of *Mussolini;* he may be needed to save us from the American equivalent of *Lenin. . . .*"

This may appear a long way off from literature, but so much is clear: those members of the younger generation of writers who recognize More and Babbit as the "two most mature intellects in American letters," differ from the Wilsonian group in refusing to divorce literature from politics. Consciously or unconsciously they, like Marinetti and his followers in Italy, are creating an aesthetic fig-leaf for the politics of fascism. It is difficult to say how many of the younger writers share the social attitude expressed by More and Babbit; but Munson, at any rate, makes the logical literary deductions. Commenting on Vachel Lindsay's poetry, he finds it a "bad fallacy" to expect a cultural rennaissance "from below up"; on the contrary, he looks for it to come "from above down."

No one has faith, Munson says, that "the Australian bushman or the *Negritos* in the Philippines will give the impulses toward cultural florescence, but nevertheless many do talk about such impulses rising from the soil of the proletariat. . . . History instructs otherwise. The forming and regenerating impulse appears to come from a leader of great personal development and his band of specially trained followers."

The great-man theory of history could not be stated more crudely by Mussolini himself. Yet what have these new literary "leaders" to offer us? Munson, despite his avowed contempt for the "romanticism" and "humanitarianism" of the Wilsonian group, simply drains their bitter despair to the last drop. He says:

> "Dreiser has given us the youth who perceives that nature is ruthless, unsentimental, and society revealed as a scramble for power, with the rewards, money and women, going to the crafty and strong. . . . Sherwood Anderson carried the symbol further. His youth attained the rewards of such a struggle, but then revolted against the material fixities of life. They were insufficient and more than a little sordid. Something was not satisfied, and his protagonist turned his back on them, turned groper for other values. . . . Is it not possible to carry this symbol still further, until

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> we reach the man who has lost his illusions concerning wealth and sex and art and social reform?"

Such an utterly negative "program" rejects the very foundations of life, and suits either despair or boredom. It may be a "remedy" for people who are impoverished in every way and have lost all hope of ever attaining "wealth and sex and art and social reform"; or for people who have all the wealth and sex and art they want, consider society beyond improvement and play with the notion of "perfecting the individual" in some vague "humanistic" manner.

THE LEFT-WING WRITERS

The left wing of American literature, like the right, has passed through some notable changes. The generation which was at its zenith in the Wilsonian period, continues to develop along its established lines. Upton Sinclair, the only living American author with a reputation, who has written novels of working-class life, is still vigorously turning out books. He continues to be the only socialist novelist in this country of any consequence. His collected works make an imposing list and include some great pamphleteering. The suppression of his novel *Oil* by the Boston authorities brought him back into the literary limelight from which the critics had banished him because he is only a "propagandist." *Oil* has been praised now even by the bourgeois critics, one of the most conservative of whom compared it to Balzac's work; and those American workers who read belles lettres consider it one of their few classics. The same is true of his new novel *Boston*.

The discussion which these books aroused afforded Sinclair an opportunity to clarify his social philosophy. To one critic who said Sinclair had accepted the Marxian formula at twenty-five and then stopped thinking, he replied: "I don't think I ever called myself a Marxian and I have changed my views so frequently that my socialist comrades consider me very unreliable. What I accepted at twenty-five was not the Marxian dogma, but the general idea that the reconstruction of capitalist society will be done by the revolutionary workers. That idea was not Marx's property, nor my own, but the collective wisdom of the workers' movement for a century."

Sinclair has been writing for twenty-five years; his work therefore has found its mould and at present reveals no new trends. The same may be said of Floyd Dell, who continues to write novels of family life and the development of sensitive individuals thrown on the periphery of society.

Of the younger men, only one has written a novel dealing with

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working-class life. He is W. H. Hedges, the author of *Dan Minturn*. This is the story of a labor leader caught in a conflict between his class loyalty and his love for a millionaire's daughter.

Michael Gold, the best known of the younger writers attached to the working class, has published a collection of short stories entitled *The Damned Agitator*. He has since written two plays, *La Fiesta*, dealing with the Mexican agrarian revolution; and *Hoboken Blues*, dealing with Harlem.

Most of the other left-wing writers are writing either verse or criticism. The two most ambitious ventures have been the publication of the *New Masses* and the founding of the *New Playwrights Theatre*. V. F. Calverton's magazine *The Modern Quarterly*, published in Baltimore, also counts itself with the left wing, politically.

It is an unfortunate fact that the left wing coheres loosely and that its thinking is vague. Only three American authors have published books of criticism attempting to give a social—sometimes even a socialistic—interpretation of literature. Upton Sinclair, who wrote an "economic" interpretation in *Mammonart* and *Money Writes*, is mechanical and literal in his judgments. Thus he rejects Goethe because he tipped his hat to a prince, and Dostoievsky because he (Sinclair) found *The Brothers Karamazoff* disgusting and was unable to finish it. In *Money Writes* Sinclair contracts his concepts so that the "economic" interpretation of literature means literally that poets and novelists sell their pens consciously for money, instead of being at the same time genuine products of a given social and intellectual milieu.

Floyd Dell's *Intellectual Vagabondage* is more flexible in its interpretation, but narrower in range, and while it is more human than Sinclair's, it is too subjective to serve as a critical instrument.

There remains V. F. Calverton, who has developed his viewpoint on literature in two critical works, *The Newer Spirit* and *Sex and Literature*. In these he attempts to relate literary productions to their social background. Like the rest of the left group, Calverton has been influenced by the October Revolution. I quote some passages from a "new critical manifesto" which he issued last year, and which will indicate the trend of his thinking:

> "Our age," the manifesto declares, "is one of change and revolution. We are at the dawn of either a great catastrophe or a great rennaissance. . . . The appalling signs of decay fence in our vision in every latitude. Our social and philosophic literature has already begun the swan song of our era."

After a lengthy description of the imperialist epoch, the manifesto continues:

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> "Only a social revolution which will end this anarchy and competition can save our century from the devastating chaos that threatens it. To many, Russia is the signal of hope. There the greatest, most dramatic, most sweeping revolution of our age has been effected. A whole new culture is in the active, dynamic process of evolution. Its face is turned toward a new future. Despite concession and compromise, its new economics, new education, new art, new social life have burst upon an outworn civilization like a luminous aerolite upon the dark. . . . In the struggle against the social adversity that confronts us, a new attitude is slowly penetrating into the spirit of our age. It is the growth of this attitude that will fortify our generation for its great task. This attitude is a new realism, a tough-minded, skin-bared approach to life that is defiant of sentimentality and idealism. It abhors euphemism and circumlocution. Its aim is directness and expedition. It is impatient of delay and contemptuous of evasion. . . . It is radical; it is revolutionary. . . . The nineteenth century with its poetry of hope and philosophy of progress was an age of ideals. The new age we may call the IDEAL-LESS AGE. . . . It was the aftermath of the World War that plunged us into the Ideal-less Age. What do we mean by the Ideal-less Age? As part of the Ideal-less Age we have discarded first of all rhetoric and exclamation. We have scorned into silence the cry of ideals such as love, truth, justice. . . . We have become sick of preachments and abstractions, skeptical of word and gesture. Through idealism men have been tricked by phrase and ruined by aspiration. We on the other hand shall be realistic."

Here we find a few points of resemblance with Munson, for Calverton, like the politically conservative critic, is concerned about "our century" and "our generation," without emphasizing the social gulf, for example, between the striking Pennsylvania miners and the investors of the Pittsburgh Coal Company, who happen to belong to the same century and generation. His formulation of the contempt for "love, truth and justice" is sufficiently abstract to tally with the similar contempt of Munson, as is his abstract scorn for ideals. He differs from the conservative critic, however, in his faith that a change in the social structure will save humanity.

> "Those of the Ideal-less Age," the manifesto continues, "talk not of love but of social conditions, not of peace but of economic reconstruction. . . . They organize trade unions and not ethical clubs, teach science and not superstition, discuss economics and not religion."

Passing to the positive side of his program, Calverton proposes a

> "social art which will meet its summation in the form of social beauty. . . . Ever since the sweep of the commercial and industrial revolutions and the progress of individualist enterprise, art has become a thing of individual emotions and ideas. Its universality of

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> approach has been largely sacrificed. Today with the growth of collectivist production, a new attitude, reminiscent of the mediaeval, is gradually beginning to crystalize."

As an example of collectivist art Calverton points to Mayakovsky's 150,000,000 and to the Soviet film *Armored Cruiser Potemkin*. With so unstable a critical foundation it is hardly any wonder that he includes among the examples of the new "social art" not only Soviet authors of all sorts of conflicting schools and tendencies, but works as diverse and often antagonistic in spirit as Ernst Toller's *Massemensch* and *Maschinenstuermer;* Franz Werfel's *Goat Song,* and *Juarez and Maximilian;* Upton Sinclair's *Singing Jailbirds* and Eugene O'Neill's *Hairy Ape.*

Perhaps even in this critical manifesto, which Calverton calls "our revolutionary declaration," it may be possible to detect if not a note of despair at least of confusion; for after all, this is not an ideal-less age; on the contrary, as far as ideals realizable on earth go, no age has been as rich in "ideals" as this one. It is possible to define an "ideal" as the projection of class aims into an imaginary future. The most secret personal "ideals" would come under this definition, too, for private ambitions and aspirations have their roots in the standards of the class in which a man has his being. In this sense, we may say that our age is marked by two colossal social "ideals:"

Fascism, or the utmost imaginable power for the imperialist bourgeoisie; and Communism or the utmost imaginable freedom for the mass of humanity.

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SELF-STUDY CORNER

Leninism and War

Part III. Tactical Questions in the Struggle

A. Our Main Slogan in Connection with the Soviet Union

The Soviet Union is carrying on a definite *policy of peace.* Proof: Its response in the face of the Peking raids, the murder of Voykoff, the German provocations in connection with the technical men caught sabotaging, its attitude in the face of the Arcos raid, etc.

Does it follow from this that the main slogan of the Communist International must be "Peace?" Absolutely not. That slogan was rejected by Lenin in 1905 at the time of the Russo-Japanese war, and again during the imperialist war, as an incorrect main slogan. The reasons for our rejection of this are the following:

1. War between imperialism and the Soviet Union is in the long run unavoidable. The possibility of permanent "reconciliation" and permanent peace is just as great as the possibility of permanent class peace and permanent "reconciliation" between the working class and the capitalist class. To make "Peace" our main slogan would lead to just such Utopian illusions.

2. Since we know that war is unavoidable, our main effort should be the *strengthening of the Soviet Power* for the struggle and the strengthening of the American working class to undermine capitalism and imperialism.

3. It is to the interest of the Soviet Union and the international working class to maintain peace as long as possible, but we do not compel imperialism to maintain peace by such a slogan. We only compel the maintenance of peace by an active struggle against imperialism, capitalism, and war.

4. In a country like China, where war rages between revolution and counter-revolution, the slogan "Peace" without the previous victory of the struggle of the masses against imperialism has a definite counter-revolutionary meaning. We do not wish peace for im-

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perialism in China and peace for Chinese enslavement. We wish victorious revolutionary war.

5. There are other circumstances under which the working class would not be for peace. Our main slogan for the above reasons and for the reasons of the pacifist illusions that would be created cannot be "Peace" as a means of struggle against a coming war. Our main slogan is "Defense of the Soviet Union." This does not prevent us from making various attempts calculated to prolong peace and stave off war. For example, a campaign for recognition of the Soviet Union is a campaign to compel the government to take steps away from war. However, a campaign for recognition of the Soviet Union must be tied up with our central struggle for defense of the Soviet Union.

B. THE STRUGGLE AGAINST PACIFISM AND THE SLOGAN OF DISARMAMENT

Pacifism plays a counter-revolutionary role. We can see this in various situations.

1. Norman Thomas proposed "that the American troops should be withdrawn from Nicaragua as soon as possible." "As soon as possible" is a perfectly good slogan for the imperialists to use. The Socialist Party also proposed that Argentine and Chile and other Latin-American nations should join with the United States in supervising the elections in Nicaragua. Thus they recognized the right of intervention on the part of the imperialist powers and if actually carried out the United States would dominate the situation as it dominated the Havana Conference of the Pan-American Union and force Argentine, Chile, etc., to serve as a good cloak for its brutal imperialist actions.

2. *The League of Nations.* The League of Nations was founded under the slogan of peace—ostensibly to abolish war by means of arbitration and peaceful agreement. The very announcement of their purpose is a means of deceiving the working class. *The abolition of war is impossible under capitalism.* It is even more impossible under the imperialist stage of capitalism, where the world is already divided up, colonies and spheres of influence monopolized, and, owing to the uneven development of capitalism in the various countries, a new division of the world becomes unavoidable and in these new divisions, force plays a decisive role.

"Inter-imperialist alliances" said Lenin, "constitute breathing spaces between wars." The League of Nations has not only *not* prevented any kind of war but represents an alliance making for war. Insofar as it hangs together at all, it is an alliance of various

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big capitalist powers, with the exception of the United States, and of various smaller countries dominated by the big imperialist powers against the colonial peoples (mandates, etc.) and *against the Soviet Union*. The pretense that such an imperialist League is a source of peace (S. P.) is not only the worst of pacifist swindles but insofar as the League of Nations is directed against the Soviet Union and China, this swindle becomes a counter-revolutionary weapon.

3. *The Slogan of Disarmament.* The so-called disarmament conferences of the imperialists are only maneouvers to fool the masses and to strengthen armies and armed combinations. Insofar as fooling the masses is concerned, they play a role similar to the Hague Peace Conferences with which the imperialist powers prepared the world war prior to 1914. One need only remember the donation of the Peace Prize successively to Kaiser Wilhelm, Czar Nicholas, and Theodore Roosevelt.

The disarmament conferences of the League of Nations and of Great Britain, America and Japan, have been followed by an increase of armaments. The last British-American-Japanese conference was merely a maneouver in the struggle for naval supremacy between Britain and America. The disarmament conference just held in Geneva was dumbfounded and terrified when Litvinov actually made a proposal for disarmament, as if that were the last thing in the world to discuss at a disarmament conference.

The "radical pacifist" slogan "Complete Disarmament" is intended to fool the proletariat as to the possibility of disarmament without the overthrow of capitalism, as to the possibility of peace without a definite struggle for peace by the overthrow of the system which produces war. If the proletariat disarms itself in order "to set a good example" to capitalism, the counter-revolutionary nature of this pacifist slogan becomes clear.

Only under socialism can disarmament be brought about, by the abolition of capitalism, of imperialism, of classes and of the causes of war. Without civil war with the bourgeoisie, the proletariat cannot seize power. Without armed defense of the proletarian state against imperialism, the Soviet Union cannot be maintained. Hence Leninism, under the present circumstances, rejects the political slogan "Complete Disarmament" and on the contrary adopts the slogans "The Arming of the Proletariat," "Defense of the Soviet Union."

"Radical pacifists" who advance "Red Militarism" and demand the disarmament of the Soviet Union are the worst kind of enemies of the working class and defenders of capitalism, imperialism, and

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the war system. Today, pacifism is an absolutely reactionary idea. Any one urging the outlawry of war through treaties and the establishment of universal peace without telling the working class that they will never get rid of war and establish universal peace until they have destroyed the capitalist system, is defending capitalism and war in the most treacherous of forms. Whether it be the church, which maintains that peace can be attained without a genuine struggle for peace, and against the system that causes war, or whether it be the Socialist Party, which teaches exactly the same thing, or whether it be the liberal-pacifists or any other kind, it helps capitalism and imperialism and tends to the weakening and betrayal of the working class.

Our struggle against capitalism must differentiate categorically between the various pacifist phrases of "left" leaders, Socialists, radical-liberals, etc., on the one hand, and the honest desire of the workers for the abolition of war and the maintenance of peace. The pacifists mentioned above must be exposed and fought as the most dangerous enemies of the working class. The desire of the workers for peace must be tied up with the struggle against capitalism and imperialism and the struggle for socialism, which alone makes peace possible. For this reason, also, the Soviet Union found it necessary to send Litvinov to the League of Nations Disarmament Conference, to expose the lying disarmament phrases of imperialist states. The fact that the Soviet Union put forward a complete disarmament proposal while pointing out at the same time its incompatability with capitalism, does not mean that complete disarmament will now become a political slogan of the Communist Party. On the contrary, the Soviet Union's actions must be used to expose the treachery of those who pretend that complete disarmament can be expected under capitalism and imperialism, and to rally the masses in the struggle for socialism.

The Soviet Government by submitting a complete disarmament program which the imperialists refused to accept, does not make common cause with the disarmament swindle of the imperialists and the social-democrats, but exposes that swindle and performs an act which serves as the proclamation of the final aim of socialism, that can only be realized by the establishment of Soviet Republics throughout the world and the overthrow of the capitalist system.

4. *Individual conscientious objection.* Pacifism, especially "radcal" petit-bourgeois pacifism, adopts individualist anarchist "solutions" for the problem of war. Their favorite slogan is individual conscientious objection as a means of struggle against war.

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This is an old slogan. It was advocated in 1907 at the Stuttgart International Socialist Congress by the semi-anarchist Socialist Herve. This same Herve became an ardent agitator for French imperialism and the war in 1914. Karl Liebknecht and Lenin spoke against the slogan of Herve as early as 1907. In 1922, in the instructions to the Hague delegation, Lenin wrote: "The boycott of war is a stupid phrase. Communists must participate in every reactionary war."

Communists oppose individual conscientious objection on the following grounds:

1. The Marxian weapon does not consist in individual "heroic" deeds or in individual washing of one's hands, but in the proletarian *mass struggle*. Individual conscientious objection is moreover not always a heroic deed. Many during the last war refused to fight out of cowardice. It takes more heroism by far to go into the army and carry on revolutionary work within it.

2. The masses of the workers *will join up* at the outbreak of war. The lies of the bourgeoisie, the labor imperialists, social democrats, etc. will see to that, as will the tremendous coercive power of the capitalist state and the superior degree of preparation for the war upon the part of the capitalist state as compared with the degree of preparation to resist war on the part of the revolutionary Communist Party.

The weapon of individual conscientious objection is useless for these masses. Only in rare cases will it be possible to organize masses to resist entrance into imperialist war. If this is possible on a mass scale, Communists will of course urge such proposals. But we must be conscious of the fact that it is rarely possible, and when possible, involves an already developed revolutionary situation. If the capitalists put the war across, the place of the Communists is where the masses are;—namely, in the army. In the latter stages of the war, mass objection to imperialist war may be developed, in which case the Communists will organize and lead the *mass action*. But this must not be confused with individual desertion.

3. It is the task of Communists to enter the army with the masses and to carry on untiring revolutionary work among them, to create revolutionary contacts and organizations to lead the soldiers at the decisive moment in the struggle against their officers and their own master class. Individual conscientious objection, on the part of Communists would separate them from the masses and make such work impossible.

Therefore Lenin was, and we are today, against the slogan of

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conscientious objection. At the same time, we must make it clear that we do not stand for going into the war in the same sense as the social chauvinists, and we must do the following:

a. Carry on the sharpest mass struggle against the war *today* before it breaks out; and

b. Actually carry on revolutionary work in the army. The social-chauvinists are against conscientious objection in the interests of the bourgeoisie and easy mobilization of the masses for imperialist war and victory. We are against conscientious objection in the interests of the victory of the proletariat.

4. The slogan of the general strike against war, first put forward by the anarchists, was also like the slogan of refusal to fight (conscientious objection) incorrectly separated from the general class struggle and its objective conditions. The elder Liebknecht once said: "The anarchists are liberals, with bombs." This applies very well to the conscientious objector slogan. It might be modified, however, in the matter of the general strike, to say: "The anarchists are pacifists, with general strike." The general strike was a miraculous remedy to make war impossible and insure its overthrow.

Objectively, this attitude is pacifist and non-revolutionary and tends to delude the working class and fool them into thinking that it is easy to stop war by a single act of resistance. It is no wonder that the reformist trade-union leaders, supporters of their imperialist governments, adopt this attitude and slogan in order to fool the workers about the fact that they are *doing nothing* to prepare the forces of the working class for the struggle against war. (See Amsterdam International Proceedings of the Hague Congress, 1922). By radical sounding phrases about a general strike, about "meeting the war or answering the war with a general strike," they are trying to cover up the fact that they are helping to prepare the oncoming war ideologically (agitation against the Soviet Union, agitation for the League of Nations, etc.).

The working class must struggle against every manifestation of imperialism and war and every step in the preparation for war, but these reformists, like anarchists, say: "Just be quiet and at the decisive moment we will prevent war by a general strike. Let them try it and we will show them. We will answer their declaration of war with the declaration of a general strike."

5. *War and General Strike.* Leninists carry on a sharp struggle against these dangerous phrases about the general strike for the following reasons:

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a. There is no miraculous remedy against war. Only the proletarian class struggle for the overthrow of capitalism can end the system which produces wars. Under capitalism, war can be postponed but never abolished.

b. You cannot really "answer" the outbreak of war by a general strike. The bourgeoisie prepares war very carefully and long in advance and arranges things in such a way as to take the masses by surprise. The outbreak of war tends to sweep the masses off their feet and of course much more so if there is not a continuous struggle against war and if they are deluded by cheap boasts about how easy it will be to stop a war when it begins.

c. A general strike would only be possible at all if it has been *thoroughly prepared* in the same manner as the bourgeoisie has prepared for the war, in other words, if it is the culmination of a long series of sharp struggles against imperialism and against each step in the preparation for war and not something declared at the last moment when the war breaks. To prepare such a general strike means to carry on today and every day a struggle with maximum sharpness in every field to fight against the bourgeoisie, against collaboration with the bosses, to organize the workers thoroughly in militant fighting unions, to revolutionize the workers, to separate them from the bosses politically, organizationally and ideologically. The reformists reject this continuous unrelenting struggle and betray it on every occasion, but seek to cover up their betrayal by radical phrases about: "Let them declare war and we will show them. We will answer war with a general strike."

d. A general strike is not an isolated action. Not only must the working class be prepared in an organizational sense, but the objective situation in the country and the subjective situation as well must be favorable to a general strike. Such conditions are much more likely to exist after a long period of war than at the beginning, and to delude the masses into thinking that everything depends upon a general strike when war is declared, is to divert their attention from the growing struggle against war which may well culminate after a period of war and its consequent sharpening of the conditions of struggle.

e. A general strike, if it has any real meaning, must be carried out to a consistent conclusion. In other words, it must be turned into armed insurrection and the struggle for power. This requires a revolutionary situation, proper subjective and objective conditions, definite Communist leadership, a strong Communist Party, etc. To leave out all of these pre-conditions is to delude the masses and to

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play with the idea of a general strike as a revolutionary sounding phrase to cover inaction and support of imperialism.

For all these reasons, Communists fight against empty phrases and vain boasts about the general strike and how easy it is to prevent or stop a war. This does not mean that we are against a general strike. Far from it. It is they who are against general strikes with their fake phrases and readiness to play with such phrases. Communists study the objective conditions in order to determine when the time is ripe to issue the slogan of the general strike, and do not let it degenerate through use in everyday agitation until it becomes meaningless and discredited. The general strike is for us not a cure-all nor an empty phrase. We believe in its actual preparation and regard it as part of an entire series of acts of struggle as a culmination of such struggles and a means *for the transformation of the imperialist war into civil war.*

6. *Proletarian defeatism and the slogan of fraternization.* The struggle against imperialist war and imperialism *before the outbreak* of war is summed up in the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship. When the war has broken out, then this struggle centers around the main slogan: "Transformation of the imperialist war into civil war." That is organization of *revolutionary mass action* against war by a struggle against one's own master class until it is overthrown.

The first act of the government in such a war will be the outlawing of the Party, the dissolution of all revolutionary organizations and of all labor organizations that adhere to the class struggle. Raids upon headquarters, smashing of presses, lynching of working-class leaders, agitators, well known Communists, etc. Our experience with the last war and the period of the Palmer Red Raids after the war are ample evidence of that (jailing of Ruthenberg, Gitlow, Debs, indictment of the hundred I. W. W. leaders, denial of mailing privileges to the press, raiding of newspaper plants, raiding of meeting halls, frame-up of Mooney and Billings, lynching of Frank Little, etc., etc.) The attacks of the master class were far less sharp in America in the last war than they will be in the coming war, for the reason that there was not then a Communist Party and the master class had not yet learned the lessons that it has been taught by the Russian Revolution, and for the reason that the United States had not yet developed the full extent of its imperialist reaction.

Hence the *first necessity* for an earnest struggle against war is a well-functioning illegal party apparatus and press. One of the

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most important tasks of the Party in this struggle is propaganda for the defeat of our own master class. The American working class cannot fight against war, it cannot utilize the war for the overthrow of our own master class, if it does not wish the overthrow of American imperialism. In fact, defeat of one's own master class makes struggle against it easier.

By the working class of every country fighting for the defeat of its own master class and only by this means is the transformation of the imperialist war into civil war possible. This is true in the case of all imperialist wars, but much more so and in a still further and more intense sense should we fight for the defeat of our own master class in the case of a war against the Soviet Union. Here we carry the slogan a step further—namely, to a fight for the victory of the Soviet Union. (In a war between two imperialist powers, to desire the defeat of one's own master class of course does not imply desiring the victory of the master class of the opposing country, but implies action of the working class of both countries for the defeat of their respective master classes and the overthrow of capitalism. But in the case of war between an imperialist power and the Soviet Union, *we desire not only the defeat of our own master class but the victory of the Soviet Union,* whose master class is the working class.

In this connection, a number of definite "practical" tasks arise for the party. We single out two of them for special mention:

1. Revolutionizing of the workers especially in the transport, metal and chemical industries. Winning over the soldiers in the army and navy on the side of the revolutionary proletariat.

In both of these tasks, we reject mere individual acts of sabotage and insubordination as useless and injurious to the mass struggle, except insofar as they are linked up with mass struggles or undertaken for the purpose of developing mass struggles. We are of course for mass action, strikes, passive resistance on a mass scale, and all such individual activities as are joined up with these mass struggles.

Fraternization. In the world war, fraternization between the soldiers of the various imperialist armies played a big revolutionary role on both fronts, to unite the proletariat and peasant soldiers against the bourgeois officers, undermine discipline and develop international solidarity. This slogan also holds good in the coming war of the imperialists against the Soviet Union. Therefore we raise a higher form of the fraternization slogan — namely, go over to the Red Army.

7. *Anti-militarist work.* The aim of anti-militarist work is the

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rendering useless of the army, the navy and the police of imperialism as instruments of war and of counter-revolution, both at home and abroad, revolutionizing the soldiers and sailors, and inducing them to join the revolutionary proletariat.

Anti-militarist work must carry out the more important tasks illegally because the bourgeois states try to protect the "morale" of the armies and navies — that is to say, their loyalty to capitalism and imperialism. This does not mean that our work in the army is a sort of espionage. It is a form of agitprop and organization work of the Communist Party among the workers and poor farmers in the army, but under conditions of underground propaganda and underground organization. In anti-militarist work, we must try:

a. To awaken the consciousness of their class interests (class consciousness) in the workers and poor farmers in uniform who make up the mass of the army.

b. Not merely to carry on propaganda for this purpose but to mobilize them for the struggle for definite partial demands.

c. To create organizations among them in the course of these struggles.

d. To deepen these struggles into struggles not merely against the officers, but against the master class, the capitalist army and navy, and against the capitalist imperialist system.

Anti-militarist work differs from general party work in that

a. The immediate class struggle of the soldiers and sailors is not at first directed against capitalism but against their officers.

b. Partial demands should therefore in the first place be made in respect to military matters. (Communists must make it their business to become acquainted with these as a basis for formulating realistic demands.)

c. Organization and agitprop work is much more difficult than in ordinary political and trade-union work because a far greater degree of secrecy and skill is required.

Partial demands for anti-militarist work are of two kinds (these two kinds should of course be closely connected in practise.)

a. Demands for improvement in the position of soldiers and sailors.

These demands must be supported openly by Communists by the exposure of the suffering and the oppression of the masses in the army and navy and police forces. Correspondence must be organized in the barracks for Communist newspapers and special barrack newspapers should be published. (The Communist Party of France is doing this successfully at present.) We must always take into consideration that these proposals are not yet revolutionary.

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Under certain circumstances bourgeois parties have also put them forward. Hence such demands for soldiers must always be linked up with demands for solidarity with the revolutionary workers, the slogan not to shoot, etc. and with the general poltical slogans of the Party and the general struggles of the working class.

b. *General military political demands.* We are not only opposed to the standing army, but are also against the militia, home guards, etc. To both of these our slogan "Not a man, not a dollar" applies. Our aim is dissolution and abolition of the army and the establishment of a Red Class Army and Navy—down with the bourgeois army and navy. "Disarming of the bourgeoisie!" "Arming of the proletariat!" In order to make these slogans comprehensive to the soldiers and the working class generally we put forward the slogan "Arming of the Working Class." In this connection, demands for reform of the present-day army and navy—viz., election of officers, abolition of military guards and court-martial, jury trial for so-called military offenses. Soldiers' committees in every detachment to keep watch over the management and command. The right of all workers to form military associations. Free election of instructors in such associations paid by the state (these slogans cannot be advanced prematurely but must be made to correspond with concrete situations.

The formation of a workers' militia (corresponding to the Red Militia) on a local scale becomes necessary in the course of revolutionary development. When the proletariat conquers, it then proposes to form a regular military organization superior to the militia — namely, the Red Army. The demand for armed workers' guards is not a demand upon the bourgeois government in the period prior to the seizure of power, but expresses our military political demands as an appeal to the masses of the soldiers and workers when the power has been seized. Formation of a regular Red Army becomes a military political slogan.

LITERATURE ON THE ABOVE

Theses of the May Plenum of the ECCI, Imprecorr Vol. 7, No. 40, July 14, 1927, on the war danger.

Lenin on the Slogan of a United States of Europe.

Lenin on the Slogan of Disarmament.

Litvinov's declarations to the Disarmament Commission at Geneva December 1st, 1927, and the following (published in Imprecorr):

Lenin's Instruction to the Hague delegation.

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Lenin on the Overthrow of one's own government.

QUESTIONS ON THE ABOVE

1. Why is not "Peace" the central slogan of our struggle against war?

2. Why does pacifism play a counter-revolutionary role? Give illustrations from the conduct of the American Socialist Party, the speeches of Norman Thomas et al, the actions of Shipstead, Borah, etc., in the Senate.

3. How should we fight against the pacifism of the Socialist Party, of the Quakers, of the church, of the progressives, of the A. F. of L. executive council?

4. Why are the slogans of disarmament, League of Nations, arbitration, outlawing of war, Pan-American alliance under capitalism, utopian (at best) or counter-revolutionary and treacherous?

5. Why can the Soviet Union, in spite of this, put forward the demand for disarmament? Why did it particularly in the disarmament conference? With what results?

6. Why are we opposed to individual conscientious objection?

7. In what way is the enrollment of a Communist in the army different from the enrollment of a social patriot?

8. Why do we oppose the phrase of the opportunists about the general strike against war?

9. What are the steps and the means required for a transformation of imperialist war into civil war?

10. What is the general aim of our anti-militarist work?

11. What does the slogan of workers' guards or proletarian militia signify? Under what circumstances is it raised and under what circumstances is the slogan for the building of a Red Army to be raised?

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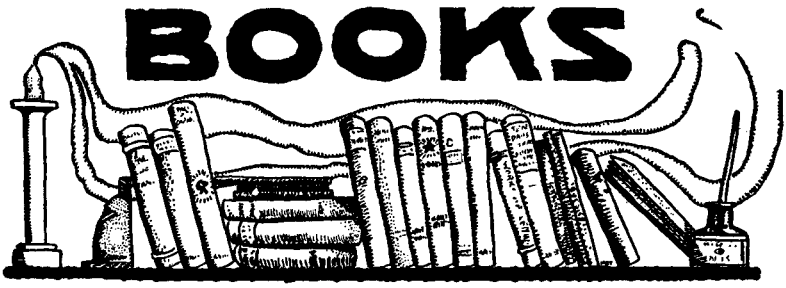

MACHINE-GUN DIPLOMACY. By J. A. H. Hopkins and Melinda Alexander. Published by Lewis Copeland Co., New York. $2.50.

The authors of this book show little understanding of the problem of imperialism. They treat the entire question as part of a capricious policy of an unintelligent administration instead of an inevitable phase in the development of capitalism. Their method is to plead with the American Government to mend its ways—to change the cruel, hypocritical policy in its relations with the Latin-American countries; "not to guarantee to any American citizen the use of the United States army, navy and marines in protecting investments in foreign countries *except and only after formal declaration of war.*"

The book discusses American imperialism as an isolated phenomenon—in no way related to the rest of the world. There is no mention of international conflicts arising from the strife between the imperialist powers for domination in industrially backward countries. The authors are beset with countless childish illusions—such as "The desire of Europe is for peace;" that President Coolidge established more friendly relations with other countries by having attended the Pan-American Conference at Havana, etc.

Their leading thesis is that "*the United States Government by the establishment of the doctrine of Self-Determination will forever silence the demands on the part of private investors for armed protection of their investments in other countries,*" that "such a doctrine will serve to encourage our citizens to invest their money at home where they are assured of sound business conditions, stable government, and normal profits."

This conclusion shows the authors' complete ignorance of the whole problem. The book has, however, one redeeming feature, and that is the copious data on American intervention in Haiti, Nicaragua and other Latin-American countries.

J. C.

THE WHITE MAN'S DILEMMA. By Nathaniel Peffer. Published by John Day Co., New York, $2.50.

This book is a mature analysis of the world we live in. It deals with the question of imperialism as an inevitable historical development of capitalism. In accepting the fact that the present system was fashioned by the machine and the desire for profit, the author says:

> "The result of machinery is large-scale production. Given the raw materials, labor and the market, there is no limit to the amount of commodities that can be produced. After the domestic demand has

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been satisfied there is every incentive to reach out for foreign markets. . . . Markets mean profits, and the more exclusive the command over the market the larger the profits."

The book contains several chapters devoted to the methods of imperialism during the last century contrasted with those of the present day. . . . The big powers today no longer occupy ports. It is too hard and too costly unless the country is small and not far away; liberal elements protest too much; it is easier for the other jealous nations to make you toe the mark so "you proceed with greater indirection and subtlety, and as it turns out—with greater profit. You make loans! How are the loans repaid? Usually with more loans and the concessions that go with loans. Until most of the natural wealth has been taken."

The natives "still rule, but what of that? You have not conquered the country. It is still a sovereign state, with a parliament and ministries and laws. You only own the means whereby it lives. And that is enough. Let me own or control a country's natural resources, banks and means of communication, and I care not who sits in its parliament and makes its laws. The country is mine."

Mr. Peffer writes a splendid chapter on the dismemberment of the Chinese Empire—"The Opium Den and the Gospel of the Redeemer and Prince of Peace—they had to be taken together and under the compulsion of guns. . . . In less than 60 years, China's gates had been battered down, 42 ports had been opened to trade, by cession or lease, eight areas had been alienated, and two-thirds of the country had been marked out in spheres of influence of one power or another. . . . In fourteen of the principal ports concessions and settlements had been staked out for foreign residence. . . . In result every strategic port of entry in China, almost every important commercial center, was a foreign stronghold managed by and for foreigners."

This is followed by a comparison between the nationalist movements fifty years ago and those of the present day. "Then there was resistance to the aggressions of the European powers, but judging from the point of view of its immediate potentialities it was annoying rather than serious. It was instinctive, spontaneous, sporadic; provoked by resentment at alien intrusion or abuses rather than deriving from a collective consciousness of violation of rights. Then they struck out blindly. But it was an act of desperation, and *not an organized expression based on a conviction . . . we see now. Now rebellion is not a matter of hot impulses, unrestrained, unrecking of consequences, unplanned. It is a thing of reason and belief.*"

The material of the book is interspersed with interesting speculations on the effects of industrialism on modern man and a few pessimistic prophecies on the results of future conflicts.

The last few chapters in no way measure up to the material in the first part. The author is trying to run away from the conclusions his material has built up. He lets the book come to a close without mentioning the future historic role of the rising class in the struggle with imperialism, and his last cry is, "let's pull out before it is too late," a conclusion totally unwarranted by the array of facts. The first part of the book was written by an exceedingly intelligent man; the concluding chapters by a person afraid to read what he had written. J. C.

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Every Communist Voter— a reader of the Daily Worker

IN THE present Election Campaign the Daily Worker supports the candidacy of Wm. Z. Foster for President, and Benjamin Gitlow for Vice-President as the representatives of the only revolutionary working class party in the United States—the WORKERS (COMMUNIST) PARTY—the only party that will put an end to this system of exploitation. A Vote for these standard bearers of Communism is a nail in the coffin of capitalism.

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